NEW MACHINE

SINCLAIR user

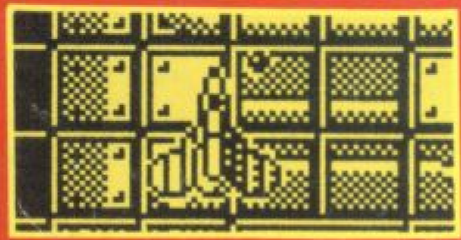
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AT LAS
AND

EXCLUSIVE!



XENON

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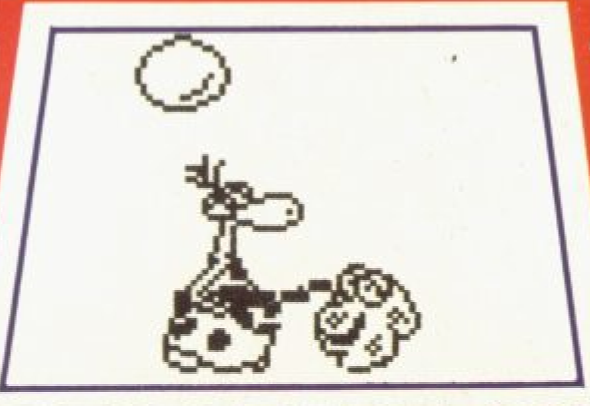
INSIDE REVIEWS OF:

- AQUA SQUAD ▸
- BLACK BEARD ▸
- LAST DUEL ▸
- SKATE BALL ▸
- PRO SOCCER ▸
- SDI*TIGER ROAD ▸
- LED STORM*MUNSTERS
- WAR IN MIDDLE EARTH
- AND ZILLIONS OF OTHERS*

* (well several anyway)

SIDE A BLOBOCOP!
PLAYERS ALL-ACTION MULTI MEGABLAST!

SIDE B XENON!
PLAYABLE DEMO OF OUR FAVE RAVE SHOOT-EM-UP



MEGATAPE 12!



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CONTE

1989 STARTS 'ERE!

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WIN A LASER 20

No we are not kidding. Though this one is not all that dangerous since it comes from Gremlin and does cosmic things to your bedroom.

WIN A FOOTBALLING CAREER 32

We'll send you for a weeks training at a major soccer school run by Bobby Charlton!

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POSTER 50

You should recognise it this month. It's the January cover in all its unadorned glory. We wouldn't ordinarily do anything so self indulgent but you told us in your hundreds you wanted it... who are we to disappoint?



COVER GAME 26

Xenon is utterly, amazingly fab! GT thinks its the best shoot 'em up on the Spectrum ever! (The most restrained among us think its just utterly brilliant). It's just about the smoothest, most challenging most addictive game you've seen in ages! We've got the exclusive review, the Blueprint and the awesome playable demo! Check it out now!

NEW READERS 48

Have you just bought a Spectrum? Maybe you've had one for years and still not been able to get it out of the box. Either way this is for you...

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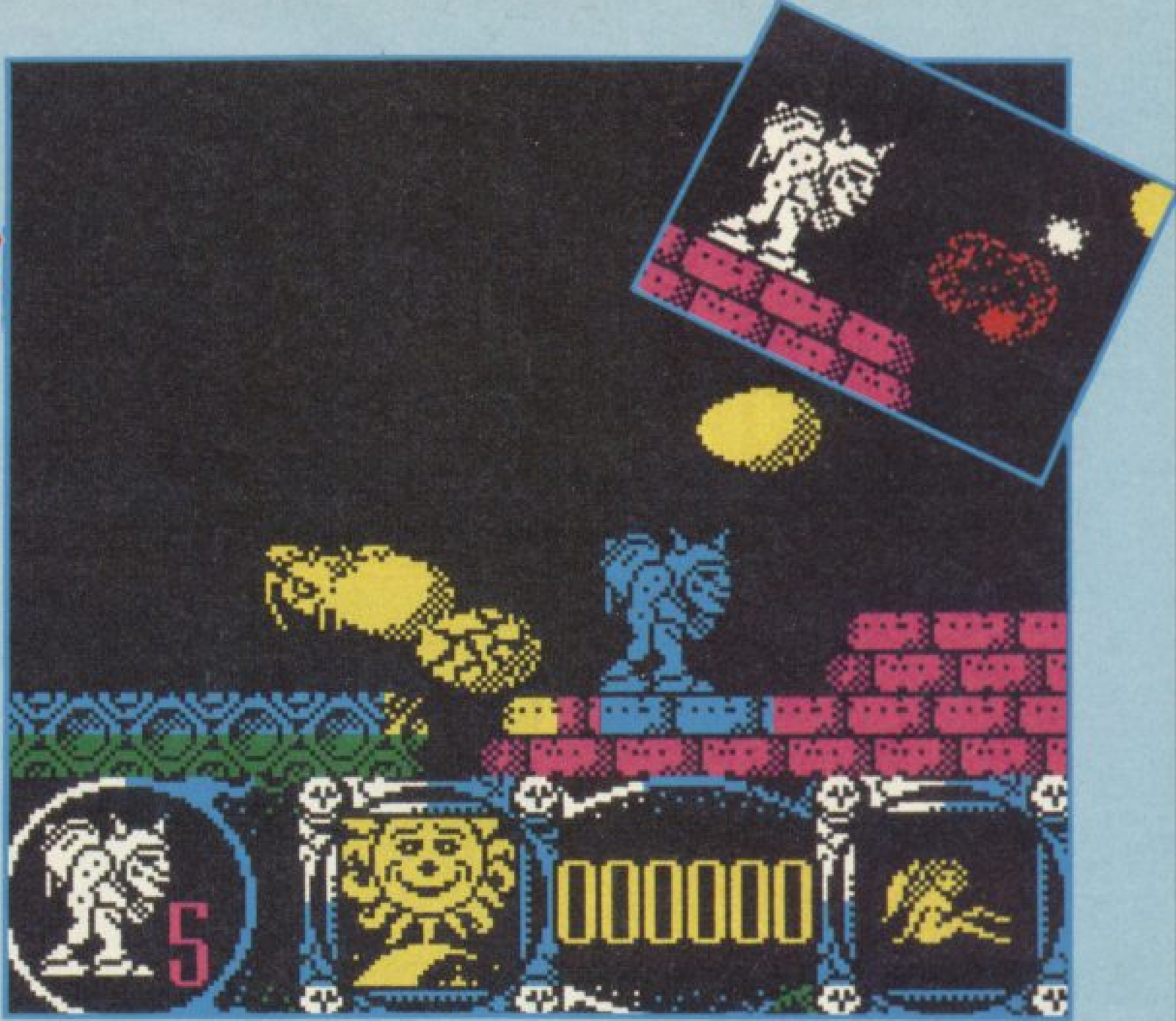
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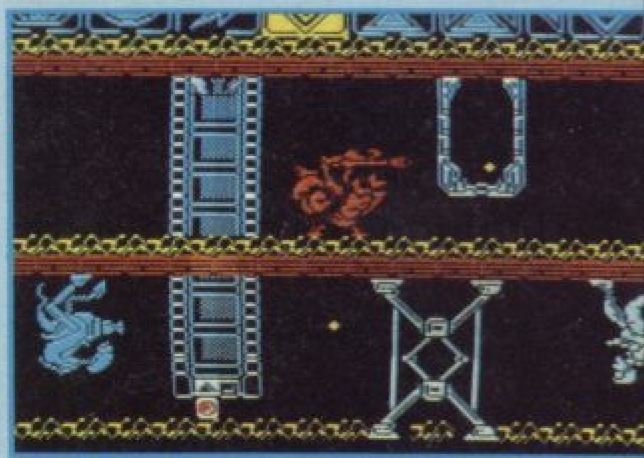


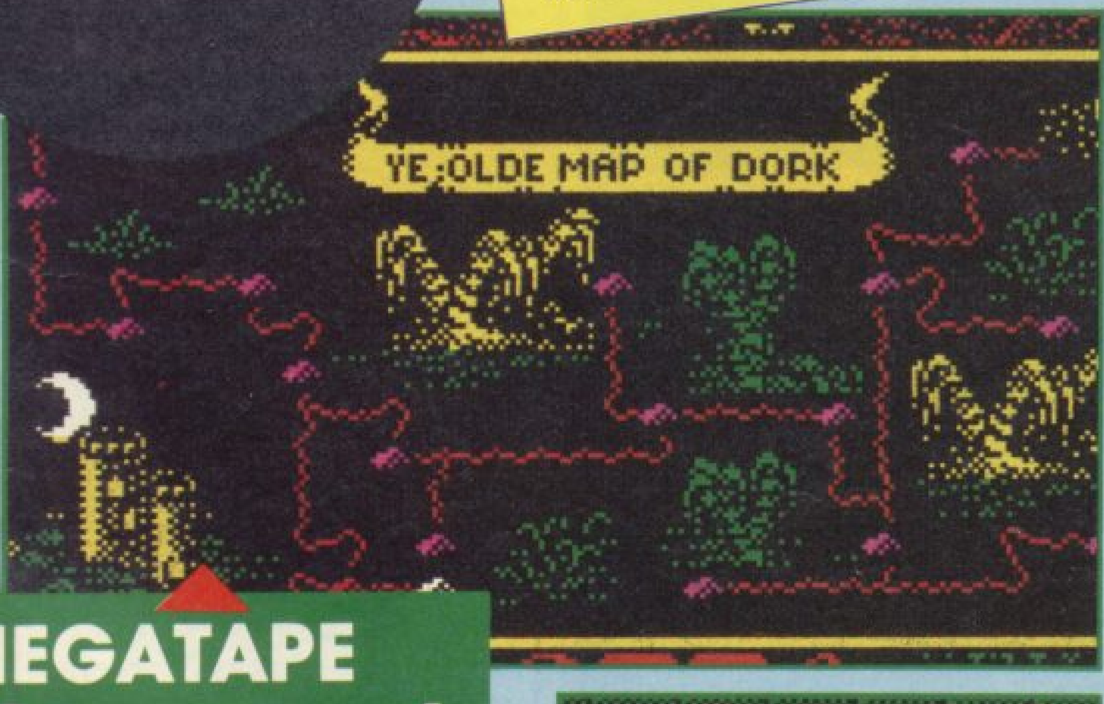
THE SUPER-SPECTRUM 36

Yes it's Spectrum compatible. Yes its got great sound. Yes it's got great graphics. Yes its pretty cheap. Wanna read all about it?

PREVIEWS 84

We've got a couple of really hot new games for you this month. In particular check out Stormlord which is the latest from Hewson's Ace programmer Raffael Cecco and looks like a cross between Exolon and Cybernoid. Take a look too at Obliterator, a major new shoot 'em up from Psygnosis...





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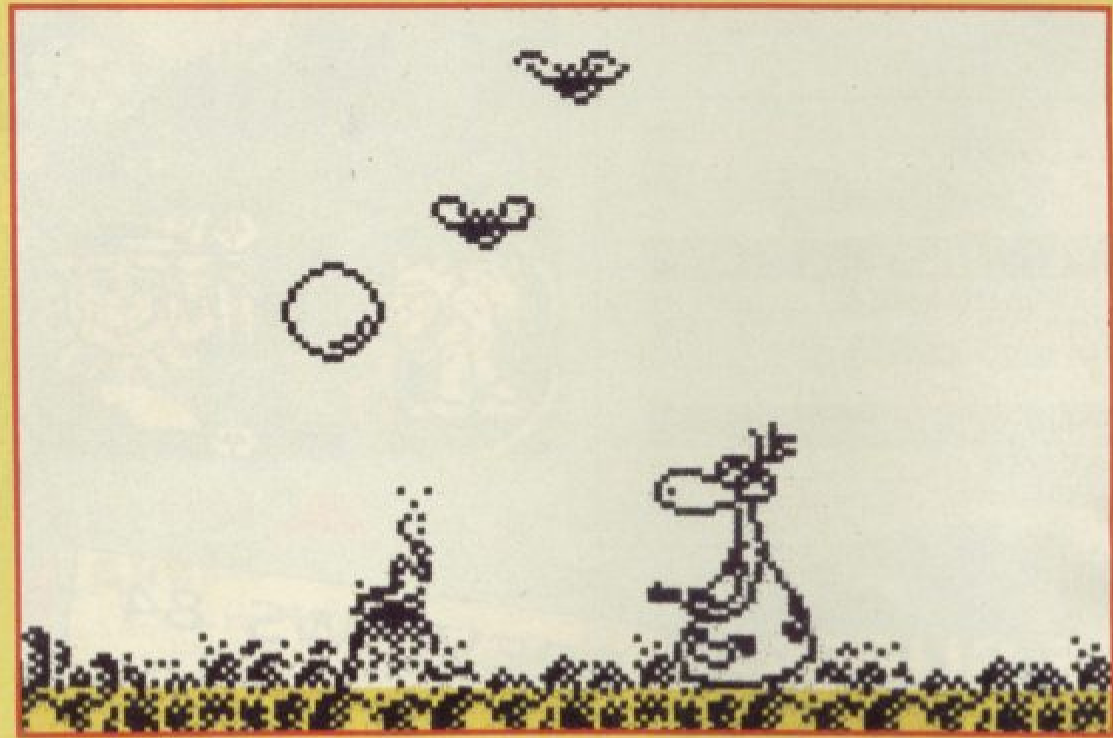
This month we've got a totally original from Andy Severn from Players. Biobocop, is a multilevel, horizontal scroller with loads of action and a brilliant bonus subgame. We've also got a marvellous playable demo of Xenon, a game to get 1989 off to a cracking start. Notorious maybe. Fantastically generous certainly.



MEGAT

BLOBOCOP

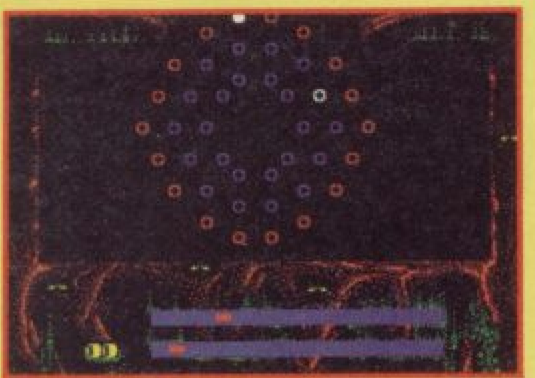
BLOBOCOP is a totally original, never before released arcade game from Players. It's been written by some of the classiest programmers in the country and it's totally bizarre. We asked the guys to explain the game in their own words, so they did. God knows we couldn't begin to know how to describe it . . .



BLOBOCOP THE GAME

Your are the BLOBOCOP. (Sorry about that).

The land of Dork is in turmoil, the 'Vice King of Dork' rules the domain. The kindly Blobs and Groks are terrorised by his disciples, the evil Bugs, Pukes and Scum-Bags.



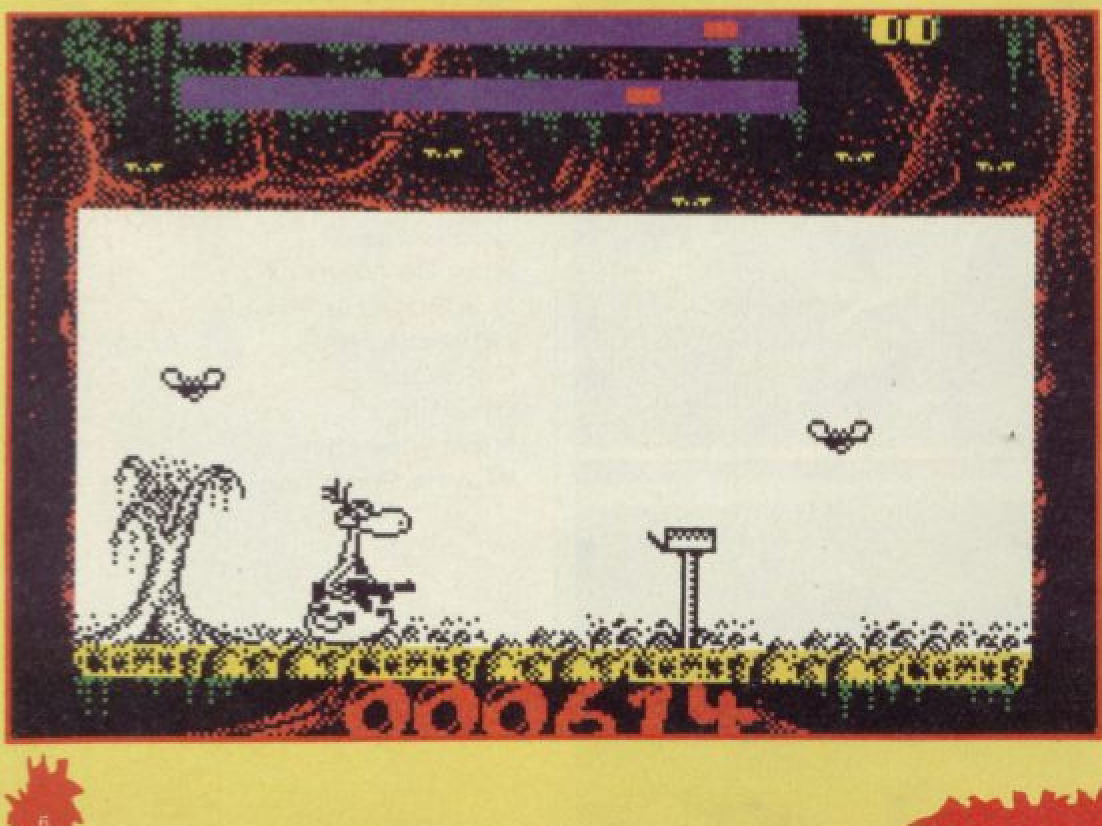
Your mission, gather evidence that will prove once and for all that the King is up to no good. You will have to visit all 18 known 'Stash Drops' in order to collect all the evidence.

When you start the game you will be presented with a map of Dork, your position is shown at the bottom of the map, highlighted in white. You have the option to take one of two paths, to select a path use your left and right keys to toggle between them and fire to select.

You may move in either direction. Walking back on yourself will take you back to your last location. When you arrive at your destination you will be presented with a sub-game. If you fail to solve it within a time limit you will have to re-visit that location in order to retrieve the evidence.

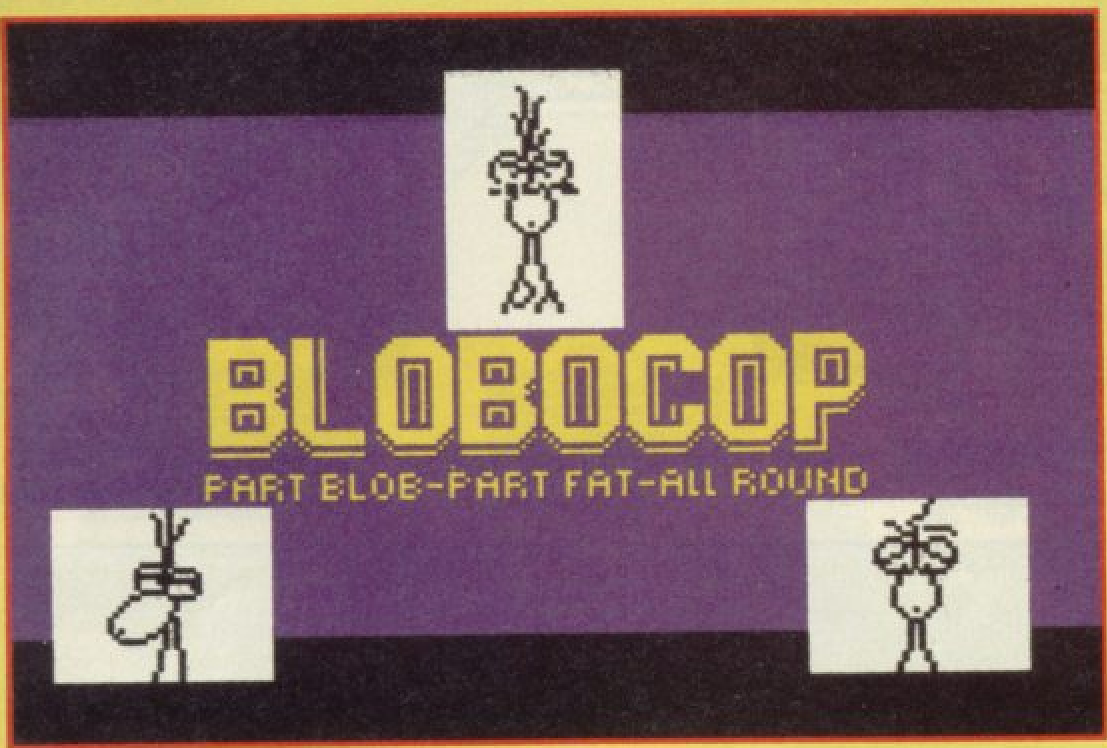
Once all 18 locations have been successfully visited you must go to the King's HQ to make your arrest. His base is at the top right part of the map.

The distance to the next location is shown by a bar at the top of the screen. Bugs and Pukes will drain your strength which is displayed just above the scrolling window. The number of stash drops left to visit is displayed in the top right part of the screen.





TAPE 12

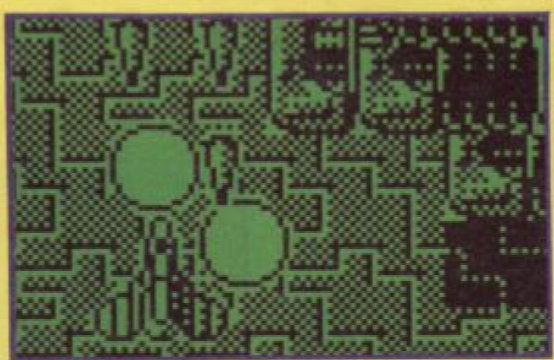


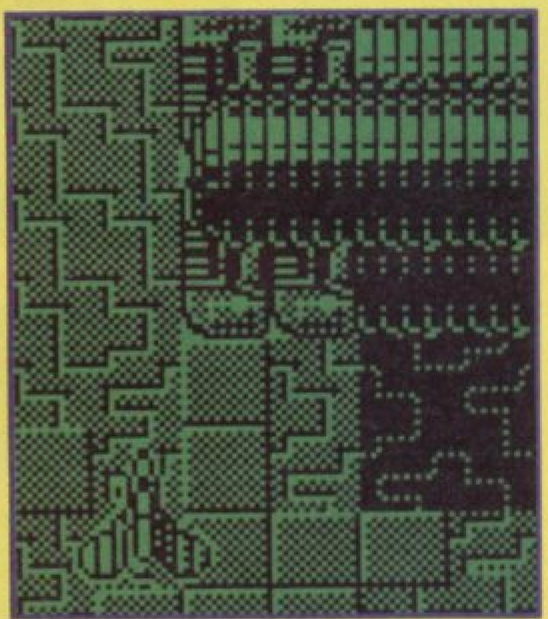
Xenon

Just load side 2 of the tape for some astounding action from Virgin's Classic (and this month's cover game) **Xenon.**

The demo lets you play a portion of the first level. You can define whichever key arrangement or joystick setup you want and then you're off!

Pilot your ship over the alien spacestation blowing up the alien gun installations. Change into a land-going craft in order to take out the trundling menaces and remember to keep firing all the time!







BLOBOCOP CREDITS

DESIGN, SPRITES & CODE

Andy 'Outland' Severn
Anfractuos (86)
Xanthius (88)
Powerplay (88)
Currently working on:
Street Cred Football

BACKDROPS

Jabba Severn
Anfractuos (86)
Xanthius (87)
Riding the Rapids (87)
Denizen (88)
Skateboard Const Sys (88)
Currently working on:
Street Cred Football
Shanghai Warriors
Task Force
B o-Fish

ADDITIONAL GRAPHICS

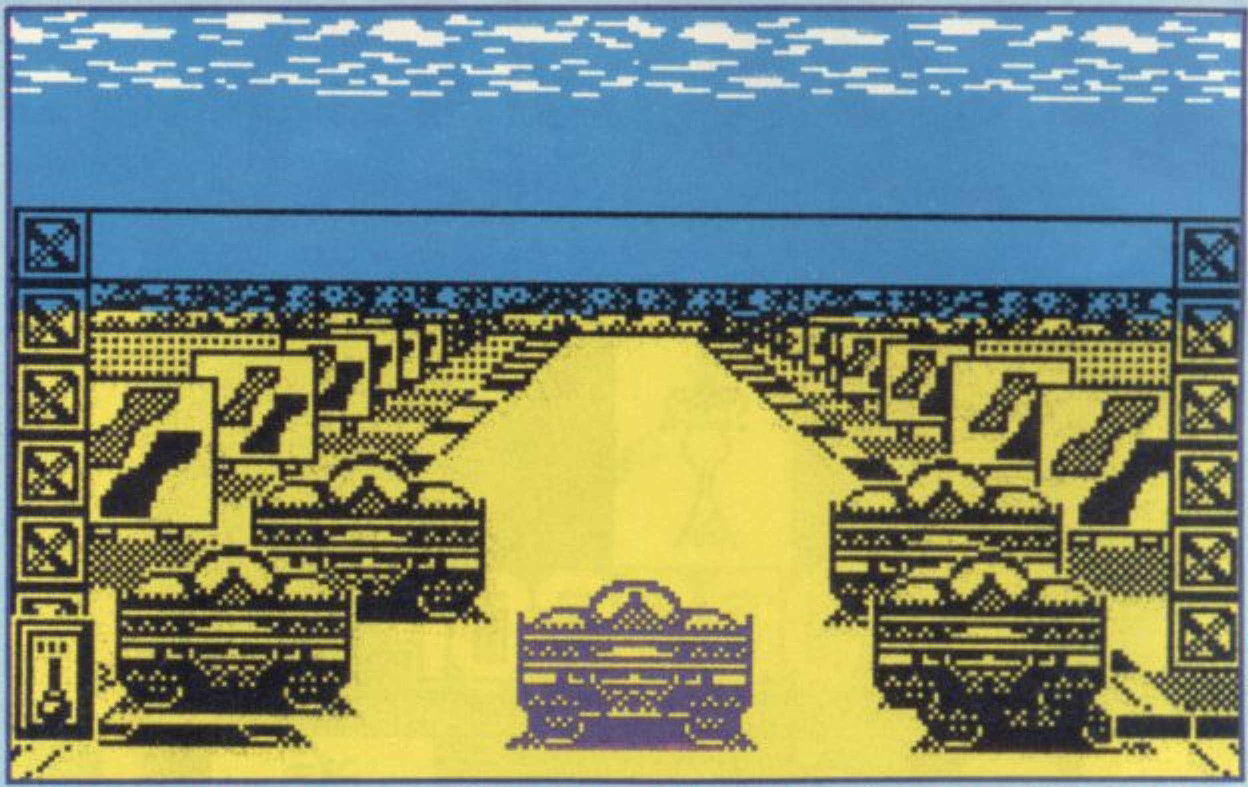
Colin Swibourne
Joe Blade (87)
Deviants (88)
Thing (88)
Bratattack (88)
Joe Blade II (88)

Wec Le Mans

The next 16 bit owner to walk up to me and say that the Spectrum is a dying machine, I'm going to kick his teeth in or I'll do the next best thing. I'll grab him by the lapels and drag him over to a Speccy, and then put on **WEC Le Mans,** the latest in a long line of racing conversions. Up until now, I always thought of **Super Hang On** as the ultimate in Spectrum racing. **Le Mans** looks at **SHO,** says "I can do that," makes the graphic bigger, moves more items around, does it faster, makes the tea, puts the kids to sleep and then takes you out for a meal afterwards. Now that's what I call programming.

The **WEC Le Mans** race itself is a 24 hr continuous race around some racetrack somewhere or other (probably Le Mans – GT).

You start under starters orders in the front of the grid. It's right from this point that you notice the acute resemblance to the coin-op's graphics. It's when the whole caboodle starts moving that the game really starts to impress.



The amount of things moving about on screen at once is probably one of the most impressive feats of programming since the rainbow processor. Either side of the road is filled with a series of light and dark bands. These scroll towards you very smoothly. The horizon lifts and falls as you climb and descend the hills. There are dozens of objects lining either side of the road at once, signs, adverts etc, as well as anything up to half a

OPERATION HORMUZ

Operation Hormuz is not, as you might expect, a medical simulation involving the removal of some strange internal organ. No indeed. It's operation in a military sense, and Hormuz as in the Arabian Gulf, an area of the world where one load of Arabs are constantly shooting up another load of Arabs because they open their eggs at the wrong end, or something equally childish.

This leads to a great deal of military argy-bargy in that part of the world, and **Operation Hormuz** is an arcade/simulation involving carrier based American fighters trying to sort out the aggro.

Hormuz is written by Durrell, whose chequered past includes some good games, many awful ones, and some of the most spectacular missed release dates of all time. This one's coming out on the Again Again label, but the question is, ho-ho, will you want to play it again and again?

You have three vertical take-off Harrier aircraft, which are based on a carrier. Your mission is to take off from the carrier, fly to a series of enemy missile bases, bomb the hell out of them and return to base to re-arm and refuel. One slight snag is that Exocet missiles fly past you aimed directly at your carrier; fail to intercept them, and you won't have a home to go to, and can't complete the mission.

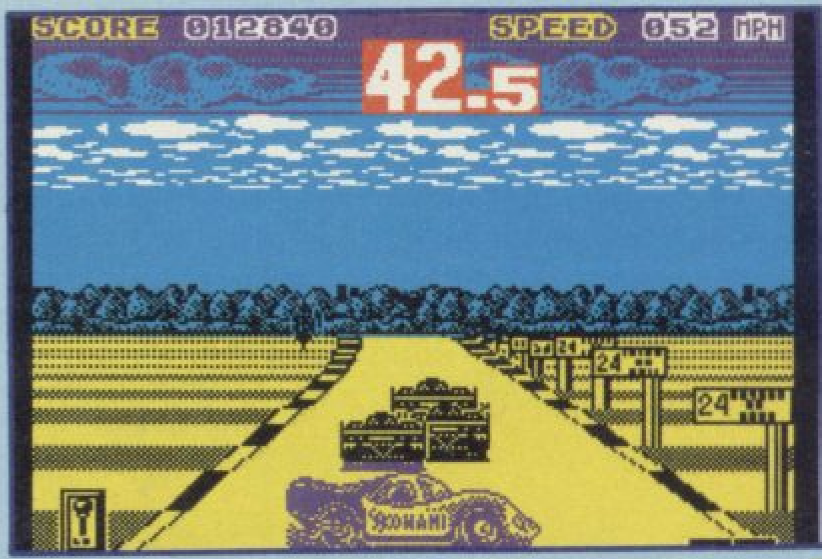




The sideways scrolling play area is dotted with oilrigs, wrecked ships and gunboats, while the air is full of MiG21s, Exocets and explosions. The graphics and animation aren't bad, but your Harrier is surrounded by an unmasked square which causes some peculiar effects.

Your planes are armed with machine guns, bombs, air-to-air/ship missiles, and flares. A





dozen opposing cars on screen as well. What's more, it all moves faster than **Super Hang On**.

The game has a memory for the opposing cars, which makes the game that tad more realistic. What I mean is, that the computer remembers where all the cars are at any time. If you should pass three cars, and then slow down, three cars will overtake you. Similarly should two cars appear on the horizon. Stop for a few seconds, accelerate into top speed and, sure enough, after a couple of seconds, those same two cars will make an appearance.

It plays similarly to the coin-op, and is about as difficult as well. The steering wheel of the original has been replaced by a progressive steering system whereby the longer you hold the joystick in the required direction, the more obtuse your turning angle.

Sound is fairly restricted, unfortunately. The same boppy tune appears on both 48 and 128 version, but the 128 is the only machine with in-game effects, which consist of nothing more than a loud farting noise.

Ocean prove yet again that they are THE software house for 89. Roll on **Chase HQ**■

ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

WEC LE MANS *Label:* ***Ocean*** *Author:* ***In-house*** *Price:* ***£8.95*** *Memory:* ***48K/128K*** *Joy-stick:* ***Various***

GRAPHICS	SOUND
94	67
85	88
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Absolutely berrilliant racing game.

Reviewer: Tony Dillon

OVERALL **91**

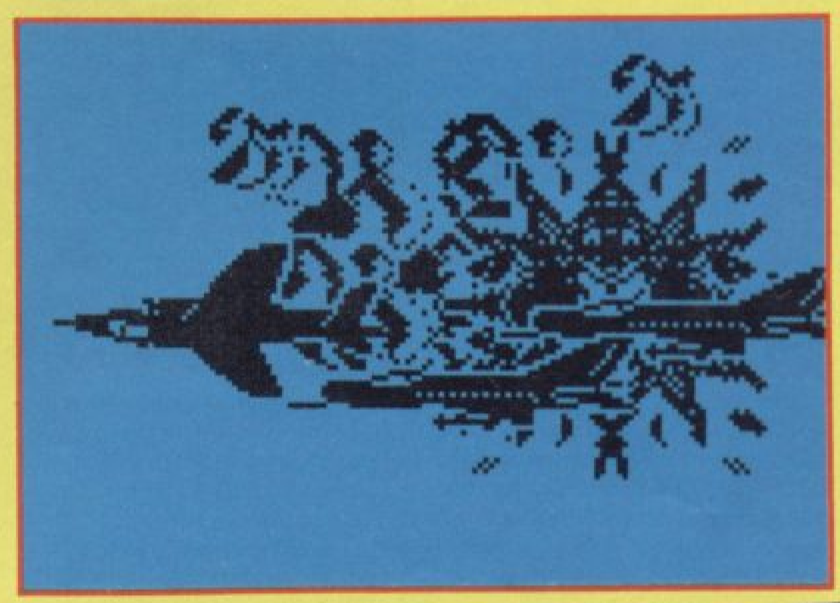
10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

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radar display at the bottom left shows upcoming targets, while a message screen gives you helpful little hints like WARNING! LAUNCH FLARE! when a heat-seeking missile is on your tail. Looping to left or right sometimes throws enemies off your tail, but it's more fun to jockey into position behind them and blow them to bits – the explosions are particularly big and flashy.

If you get far enough, you'll reach a land-based missile emplacement which you must bomb. Careful experimentation reveals that a low-level attack isn't a good idea – guns and tall buildings tend to bring a swift end to your flying career. Try instead locating your target, gaining height, then diving down, guns blazing, and releasing a bomb at the last moment before pulling out. Oddly enough you can't actually crash into the sea or land; similarly, you can't crash when you return to your carrier to re-arm, because an automatic pilot takes over and brings you safely in to land.

Not very polished or flashy, but action-packed and fast-moving, **Operation Hormuz** won't teach you much about international diplomacy, but it will teach you enough sense to stay out of the Arabian Gulf■





ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

OPERATION HORMUZ *Label:* ***Again Again*** *Author:* ***Durrell*** *Price:* ***£9.99*** *Memory:* ***48K/128K*** *Joy-stick:* ***Various***

GRAPHICS	SOUND
78	41
69	68
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Action-packed but unpolished arcade/simulator.

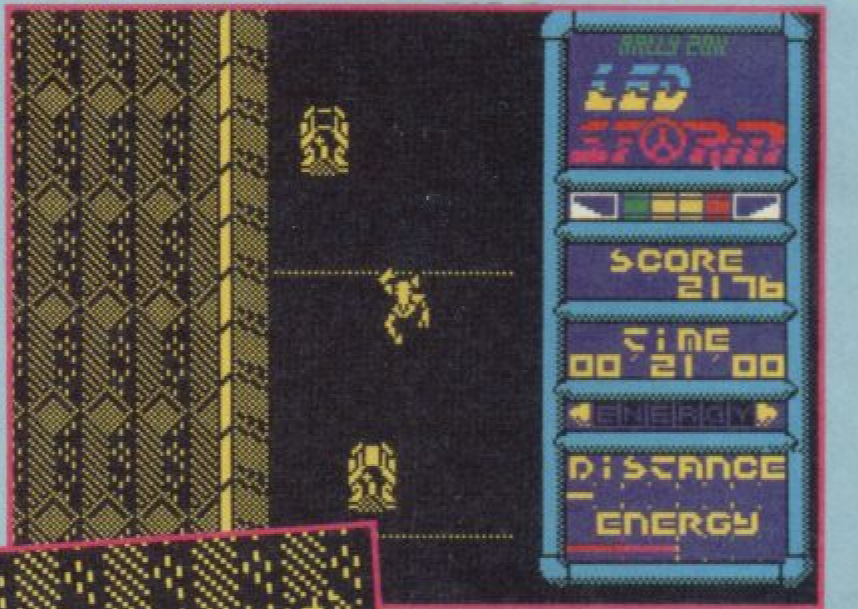
Reviewer:

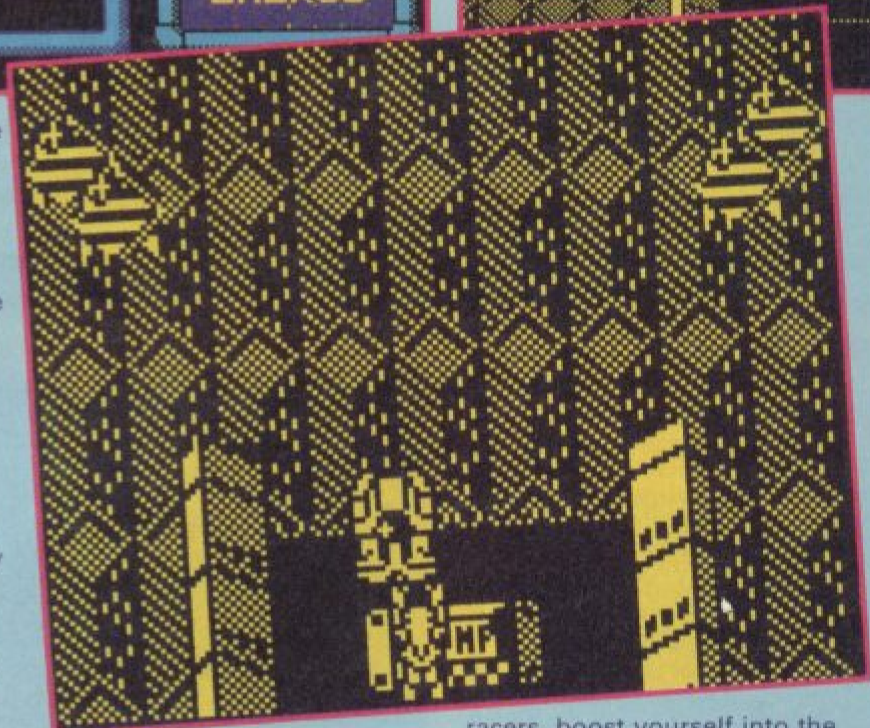
OVERALL **71**

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

LED STORM







Ooer! This sounds like one for me; futuristic racing cars with protective bumpers, astounding laser-powered turbo-charged engines, nine stages of crumbling raceway to negotiate and a bunch of slavering alien taxicab drivers and not a Give Way sign in sight. After the Huntingdon Ring Road on a Saturday, it sounds like a doddle.

LED Storm is another Capcom licence. Never having found the arcade machine in my local newsagents, I'm slightly unsure as to the fabness or otherwise of the coin-op. I'm assured by other people in the office that it's an extremely good conversion.

Still, maybe it's better to approach these things with a fresh eye. **LED Storm** is a tuned-up variant of the old old **Race** game. Remember? Driving a car along a plan-view track which widens and narrows and twists and turns. There were oil-patches and bonuses and extra fuel cans to pick up.

Well, while things have definintely been seriously tweaked, the basic principals still remain. You've got to make your way through nine stages of top-bottom scrolling roadway. The bonuses have now become extra energy stores, hazards come in the shape of the other racers and the oil patches, well, they're still oil patches.

Now. When I say scrolling, don't go thinking of jerkyspaz, slow-scroll. This is very fast indeed and once you've had the pedal on the floor for a couple of seconds and you're running at top speed, the scenery really flashes by.

In your path are futuristic equivalents of today's traffic nightmares. There are the unspeakably inconsiderate truck drivers who will simply mash your vehicle into the wall, cars and motorcycles are to be avoided and there are leftovers from **Frogger** – roller-skating toads that cling to the back of your motor in a desperate revenge attempt.

First impressions of **LED Storm** are great. The action is fast and you can memorise the tracks and gradually drive faster and faster. Jumping over the chasms and breaking down crash barriers is great fun and you can sneak up behind other racers, boost yourself into the air and smash down on top of them. Har har!

After quite a short period of time, though, I found myself re-reading the instructions and asking myself, "is that it?' Well, my old stick-shift, that **is** yer lot.

The later levels are obviously more varied and the bad drivers appear with more frequency. The backgrounds are different too, but that's hardly a big bonus.

While there are stacks of games around that rely on a single basic idea – **Arkanoid** et al, most shoot outs – the playability has to be tuned to perfection and I just didn't feel that **Storm** was there. Maybe I failed to pick up on the addictiveness, because I found myself feeling thoroughly ambivalent towards it.

If you thought the arcade game was your cup of tea, then I'd happily suggest you give this one a whirl. It looks like a good conversion and, so far as I can tell, all the elements from the original have been included. If the idea of racing from the bottom of the screen to the top for an eternity fails to do anything for your spark plugs, steer clear. (Yak!)■

FAX BOX

ARCADE REVIEW

LED STORM *Label:* ***Capcom*** *Author:* ***In house*** *Price:* ***£8.99*** *Memory:* ***48K/128K***
Joystick: ***Various***

GRAPHICS	SOUND
72	66
60	59
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

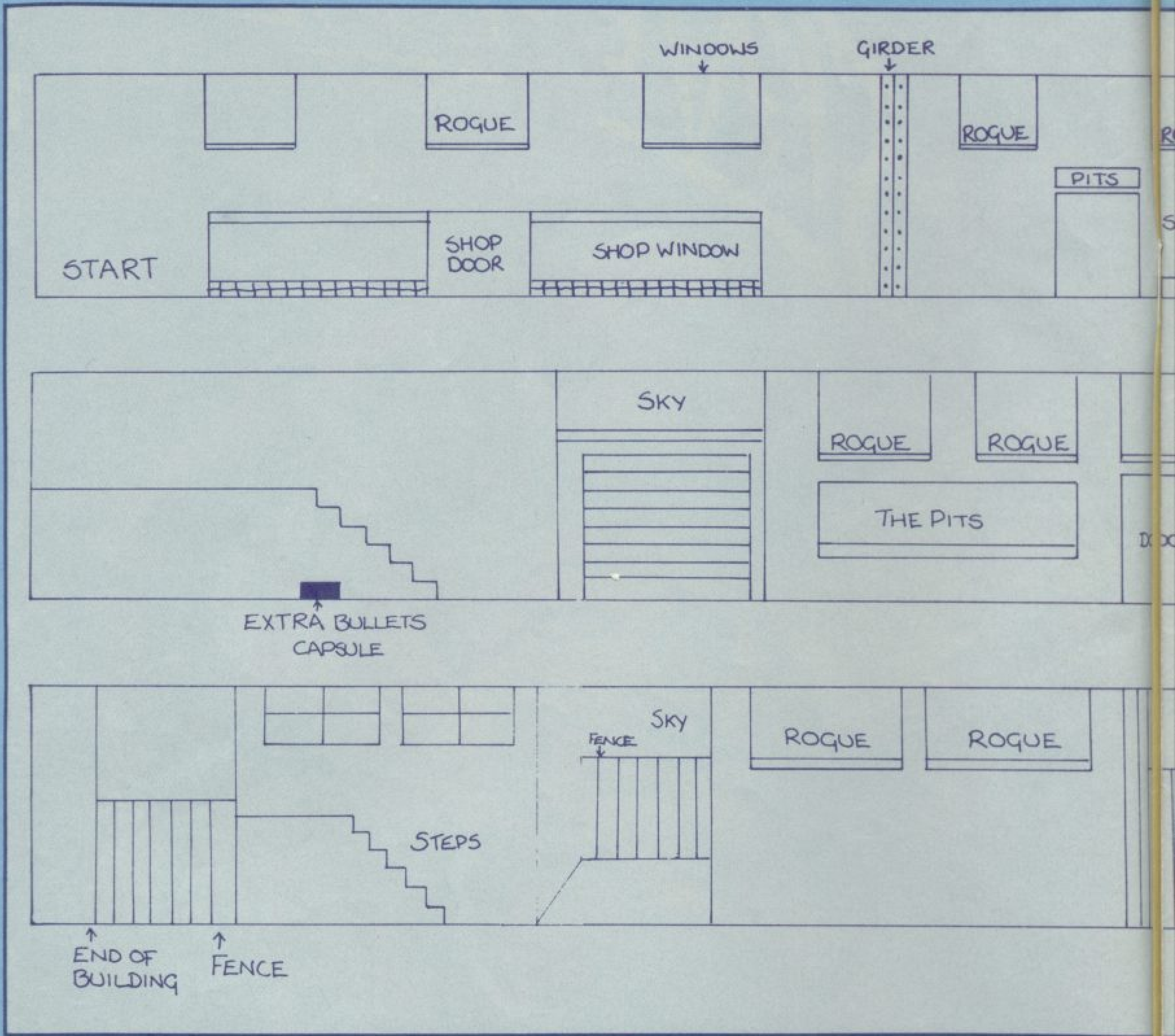
Good conv of slightly uninspiring coin-op.

Reviewer: Jim Douglas

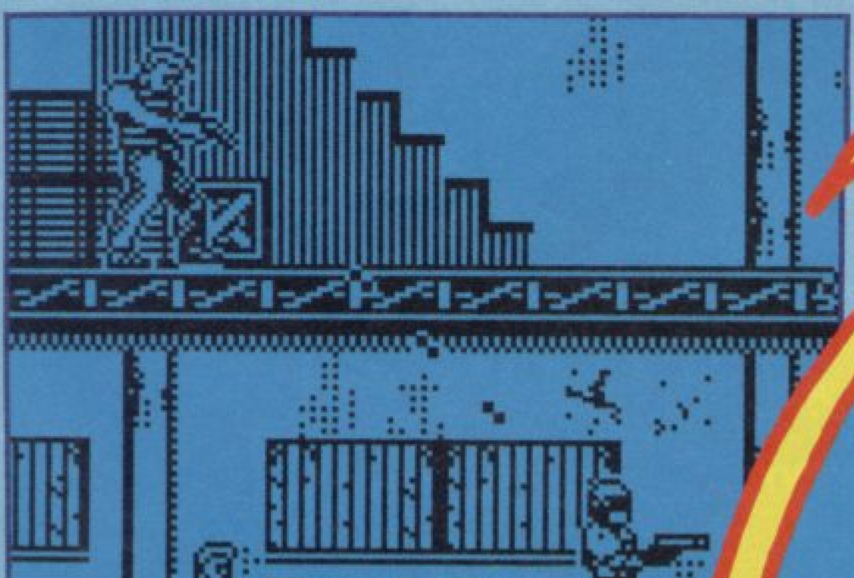
OVERALL **63**

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

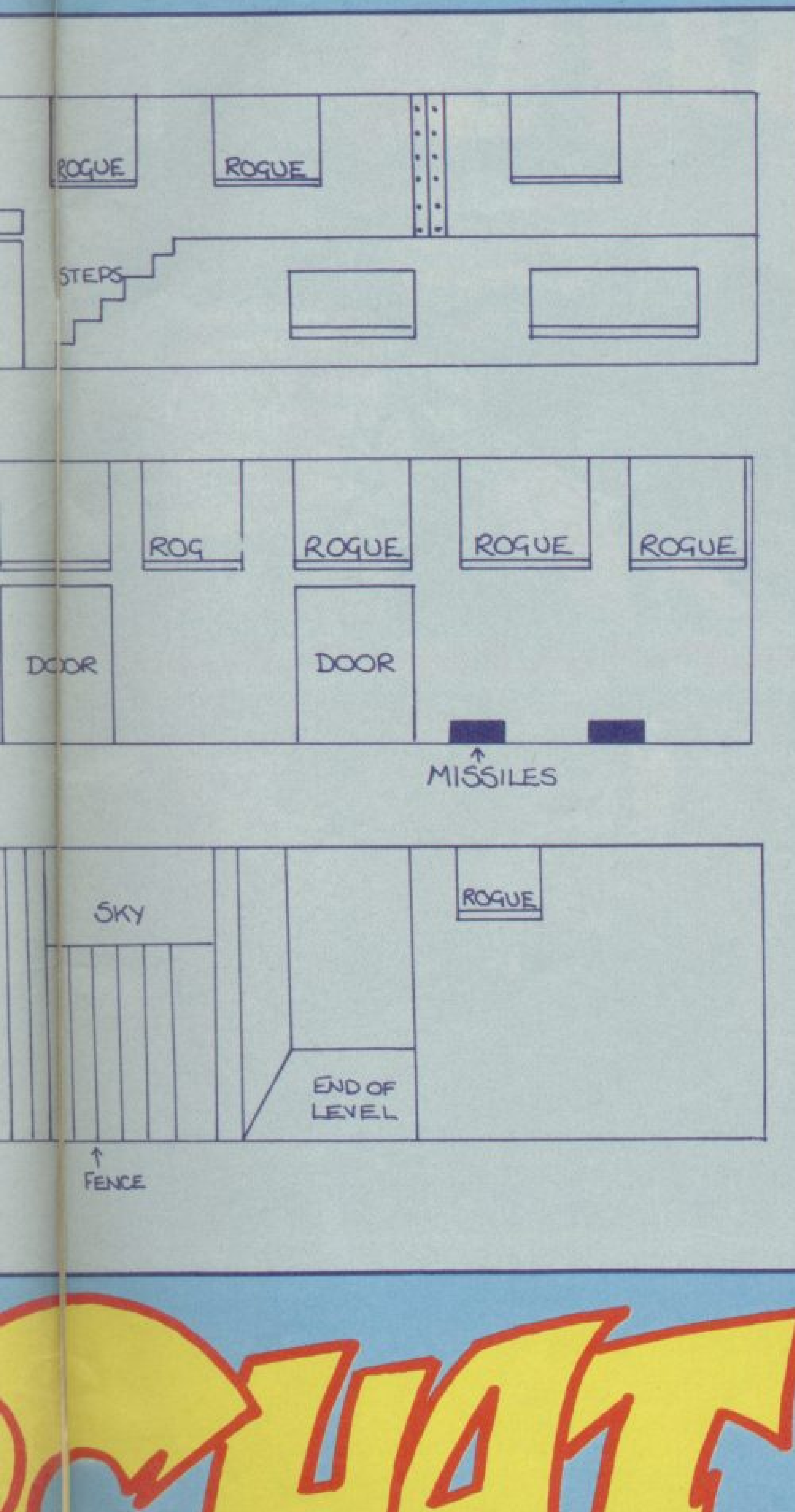

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SKY
FENCE
ROGUE
ROGUE
STEPS
END OF BUILDING
FENCE



ZAP



Food. Lovely gooey mushy peas, washed down with a pint of fizzy orange, or tweaky snappy Curly Wirly bars which get all hot and sticky if left in the pocket for too long. Such are just some of the delights to be encountered when trogging through the world of food with the grace of a wispfooted pixie pondering the toadstool of life, or something like that at least. Whether you're popping out to gorge yourself on a Wimpy of staying at home to bake some crumpets, you're gonna need to eat food. If you don't you'll fall over and rot. If you eat too much then you could find yourself wearing glasses and being called Tony a heck of a lot. So, here at SU we thought we'd have a Food Awareness Month where we'd sit under the stars and gasp at the little twee creatures crawling under our feet. We may even get around to printing some tips, provided they're toasted and covered in melted cheese. (This is even more ridiculous than usual Riglar . . . GT).

CHAT

ROBOCOP . . . Ocean
PART MAN, PART TOOTHBRUSH, ALL DUDE: *Jon Riglar*

Still trogging your way through level one or are you completely stuck by the zonking great baddie in level two? Well, chuck us a packet of Wotsits, sing us a song and you may well find all the mystic runes necessary to get the old so-called 'Robocop' through level one, two and who knows what. So get those peepers into action missus! (Who is this 'missus' geezer anyway? – GT)

LEVEL ONE

Shoot shoot, bang bang etc. Old Robocop has really got his work cut out in this level worrying about the time limit along with his rapidly diminishing supply of ammo. Right from the start, he'll be attacked from the right by three rogues armed with machine guns. As soon as you get a whiff of them, duck down and blast. Each man in the group will need to be shot twice before the old so-called 'bucket'. Try not to move too far to the righthand side of the screen, or you'll find a man leaning out of the window above you trying his best to knock you off. Provided you've managed to kill the rogues of ground level, you can then turn on your heels, shoot diagonally and kill the critter up above.

Moving on (presuming you are moving on and aren't lying face down in the gutter already) the next rogue to try and attack you will be charging along with a dirty great mallet. This is one tough cookie. It's no good kneeling down and blasting 'cause he needs to be hit about fifteen trillion times before turning his toes up, and you can't afford to waste that amount of ammo, oh no. Instead, wait until he creeps up close and then biff him in the kisser.

LEVEL TWO

Uh oh, it's level two! (As Derek and Clive would no doubt say rather too loudly.) Well this is a bit of a change. You control the old crosshair and it's up to you to blast away the nasty critter holding the hostage. The best way to succeed at this is to watch the movement patterns of the bad guy and try to anticipate which direction he is sliding next. You will find that the rogue moves slightly ahead of the hostage and so with some careful aiming, so shoudl find a few inches of his flesh clear for a shot for a few seconds. By repeating this process of thinking ahead, you can add up the number of hits and knock him out of action provided he doesn't get at you first.

If you are on your last life and running low on the energyometer then it is often easier to simply kill off the hostage giving you a clear attempt at the bad guy. Obviously if yoy knock off the hostage you are failing to follow one of your prime directives and so don't expect to get a decent score on this level, BUT this is a desperate measure and will get you through to level three.

LEVEL THREE

Uh oh, this looks a bit like an extended version of level one actually. Lots of big bad guys hanging out of shop windows and doing their best to blast you away as well as a fair thousand fellas attacking you on ground level with either machine guns or mallets. At the end of level three you'll also find some mad motorbikes who can only be killed off by kneeling down and keeping your finger on the fire button. Uh oh.

A few more steps to the right (This isn't the Timewarp you know – GT) and you'll be attacked from the men above once more but this time there'll also be another rogue on the platform up. This guy runs from left to right and if you miss him it's quite likely he won't miss you if you know what I mean. Knock him out as soon as he appears on the screen using the old diagonal shot.

By now you should be jumping up and down and getting worried about the fact that you'll be very soon running out

ZAPCHAT



of ammo. Well, right here is a spare canister which you just run over to collect. The third and final type of rogue you'll encounter in this level is the type that throws karate kicks all over the shop. These fan be shot as normal with your standard gun or you may try and preserve as much ammo as possible and wait until the rogue jumps up into the air for the kill, before you lift your fist into the air and whallop him to ground. Berlee!

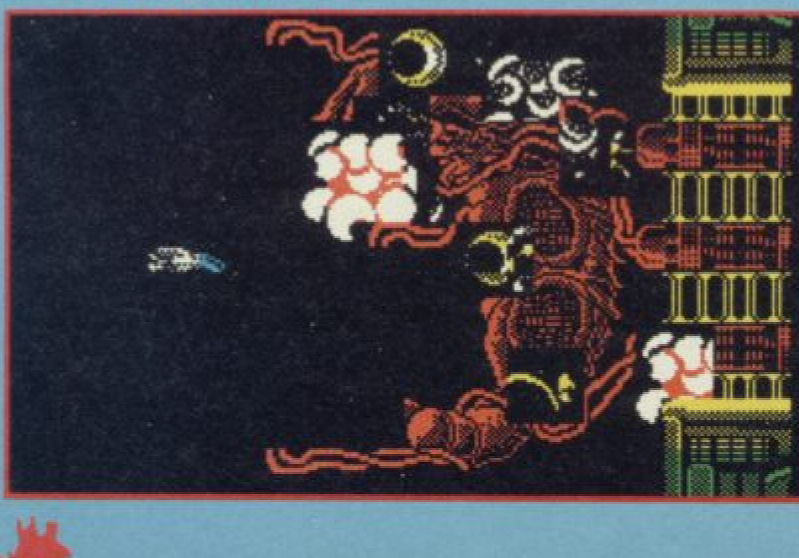
Level one carries on in roughly the same manner as above but about mid-way there are extra powerful bullets which you can pick up – all the rogues can be terminated with one shot using these bullets but the amount you are given is limited to 20 rounds. Towards the end, you'll come across an alleyway. This symbolises the end of the level and it is here where you'll have a final show-down with the rogues. Any of the critters who managed to escape your grip will now appear and charge towards you and if you've run out of bullets your and in the s/@''t.

THE POKE CORNER RETURNS! DIZZY DIZZY DINOSAUR TRAINED BY: *Jon 'A pint of Murphy's' Riglar*

Indeed, it's back! (Muffled blowy noises from staff). It's run around the world for a bit, popped into Yankee Burger for a big hot onionburger, trogged its way around town looking for decent clothes in the sales, but, after all this, it's come back! Some said the last time they saw it, it was wearing flapaway flares. Others said it should stay away. But here it is missus, and in bumper form too. And just to clear up a few points – you need a Multiface or its equivalent AND the game concerned to use these pokes. (Although the game is not so worried about it now!?!)

BARBARIAN (Pys)	Poke 27680,0	Lives
CYBERNOID 2	Poke 32202,0	Ammo
DARK SIDE	Poke 45482,0	
	Poke 47924,0	
	Poke 45436,0	
	Poke 47621,167	
DEVIANTS	Poke 35272,0	
	Poke 35286,0	Ammo
LAST NINJA 2	Poke 29966,n	Lives
	Poke 40777,0	Lives
R-TYPE	Poke 37374,0	Lives
	Poke 37525,0	Credits

Fin! (I beg your pardon. – GT)





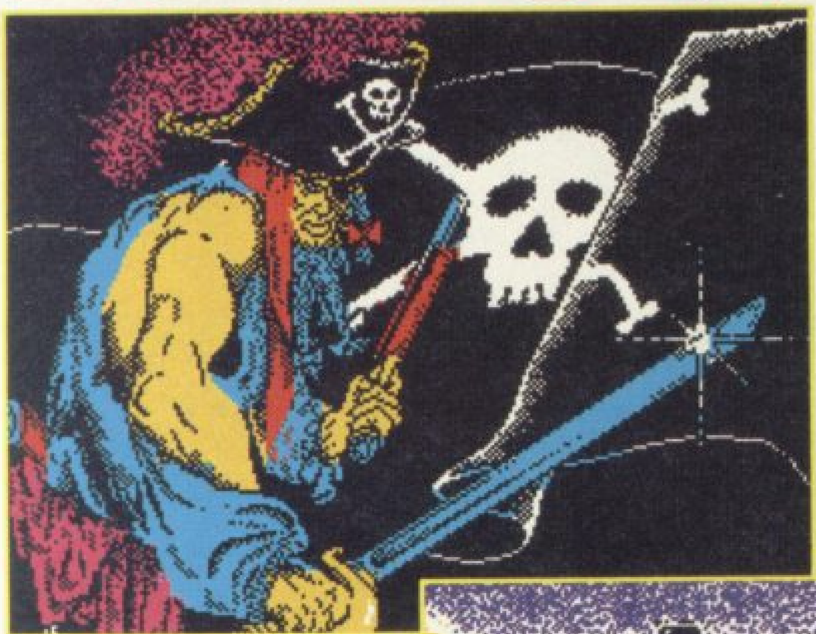
MUNCHY HIGH SCORES DEPT 12 MAN AT TESCOS: Norman Nobrain OAP

Oodles and oodles of people are still sending in their 'I've just complete *Where Time Stood Still,* am I the first? letters, so we've set aside part of this month's high score chart so they can boast to their hearts content. If the spindly finger of fate has pointed at your computer and you come up with a world beating high score then send it on in to 'Atmospheeere, ah love a party with atmospheeere!' by Russ Abbot, followed by the usual waffle. Is that how you spell Tescos anyway? (Stop dropping names Riglar, I'm not going through another court case this month – GT).

David Blackmore	Outrun	1,980,220
Warren 'Wh' Batrick	Outrun	2,300 (Call that high?)
James North	Paperboy	70,540
Andrew Dean	Cybernoid	56,750
Chris Jenkins	WTSS	Completed
Glenn Farr	WTSS	Completed
Jim Cox	WTSS	Completed
Phil Honeywell	WTSS	Completed


STALLONE
He's back and this time he's taking no prisoners!
Colonel Trautman has been captured by the Russians in Afghanistan and there is only one person capable of freeing him. Negotiate the minefields, explore the Russian camp, lay boobytraps, avoid detection, free the Colonel and then ... move on to the explosive climax! RAMBO IS BACK!
RAMBO III
SPECTRUM COMMODORE AMSTRAD
8·95 9·95 9·95
CASSETTE
ocean
COMMODORE AMSTRAD
14·95
DISK
Ocean Software Limited
6 Central Street · Manchester · M2 5NS
Telephone 061 832 6633
Telex 669977 OCEANS G
RAMBO III TM & © 1988 CAROLCO PICTURES INC. All Rights Reserved. Unauthorised Duplication is Strictly Prohibited.

BLACK BEARD



HAAR-HAAARRRR! Shiver me timbers! Splice the mainbrace! Hoh-hoh, Wayne lad! And other predictable comments suitable for reviewing a pirate game – only with a Spanish accent! Because **Black Beard** is by Topsoft, that's why, and quite right too, because lots of 16th century pirates were Spanish,



Anywayup, this is a remarkably pretty game which bears not a little resemblance to **Dandy** and some other **Gauntlet** clones of yore. The gameplay's a tiny bit repetitious, but then, so is a life on the ocean wave, so at least you can't say it isn't realistic.

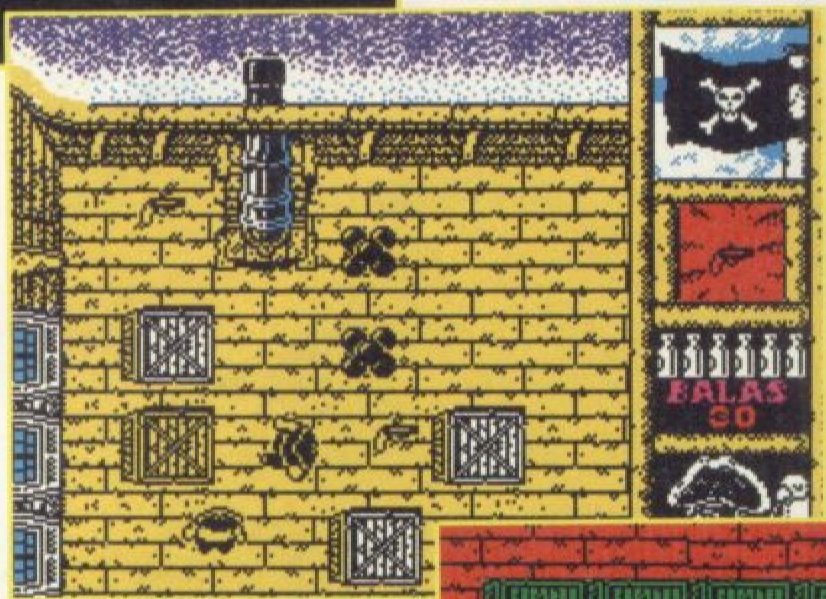
You play the jolly savage cut-throat Captain Blackbeard, who was **SOOOOOOO** annoyed to find that Captain Redbeard has stolen a valuable treasure map, that he's sworn to kill his entire crew, get the map back and probably eat his salt-biscuits.

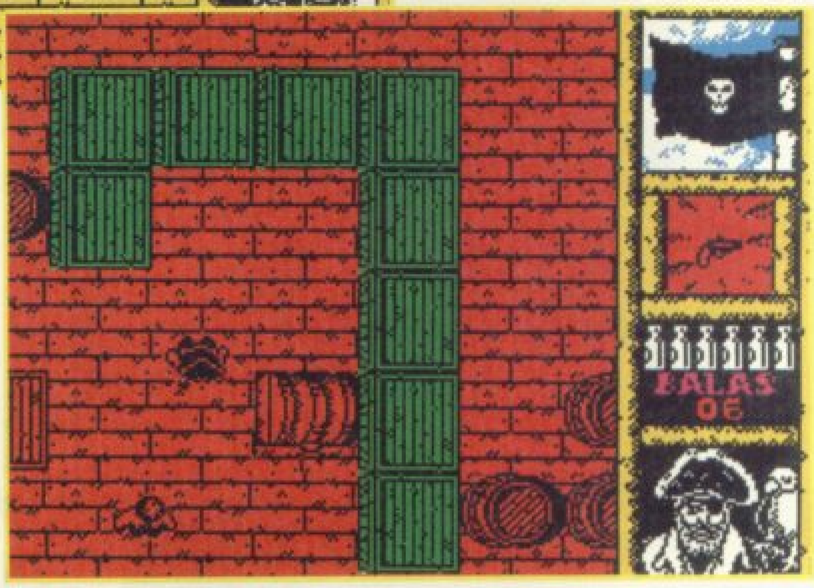
The game takes place on Redbeard's ship, the Victory. The scenes are shown from the top down and are admirably detailed, featuirng cannon, hatchways, ship's boats, caskets, cannonballs, bulkheads and the like. The design's great, and the use of colour excellent. The screen scrolls smoothly as you move around, to reveal new sections such as the cabins, storage holds and gunnels (those are the gungy bits at the bottom of the ship). If



you're interested, the layout of the screen is based on the design of the real HMS Victory, so there's a bit of free education for you.

Around the decks prowl





pirates, armed to the underwear. You must kill the lot of them to achieve your goal; to do this you must pick up guns and knives which are found scattered around the decks. Guns come with thirty bullets each, while knives stay sharp for ever; the problem is that you need a gun to open treasure chests which contain life restoring potions and lanterns. The lanterns also help you fire the cannon, which will slow down the pirates' attacks, though I haven't yet managed to work out how this is done.

Also found scattered around are bottles of RUM! Haa-haaarrrr! Trouble is, while some of them do you a power of good, others are spiked, and make you reel around uncontrollably for a few moments. In these moments it's pretty likely that you'll collide with a flying knife, bullet, or pirate, thus losing a life.



Another good way of losing a life is to plummet through the canvases which cover the stow holds. While this is a quick way to get to the lower decks, the recommended method is to find a ladder, stand over it and press fire. That way you don't break your neck.

While the game area is fairly large, it's not big enough to require making a map, so you probably won't spend months of your life playing **Black Beard**.

You will, though, enjoy the time you spend with it; nice graphics, decent music and FX, and an original setting make this an excellent example of the budget game. Buy it or walk the plank■



ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

BLACK BEARD** Label: **KIXX** Author: **Topo-soft** Price: **£2.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **Various

Frisky fun with pesky pirates by the Spanish scallywags.

GRAPHICS	SOUND
85	70
79	60
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Reviewer:

OVERALL **81**

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90



CBM SCREEN SHOTS

SPECTRUM VERSION CASSETTE £8.99
DISK £12.99

1 Saturn House
Calleva Park
Aldermaston
Berks RG7 4QW

DR JOY

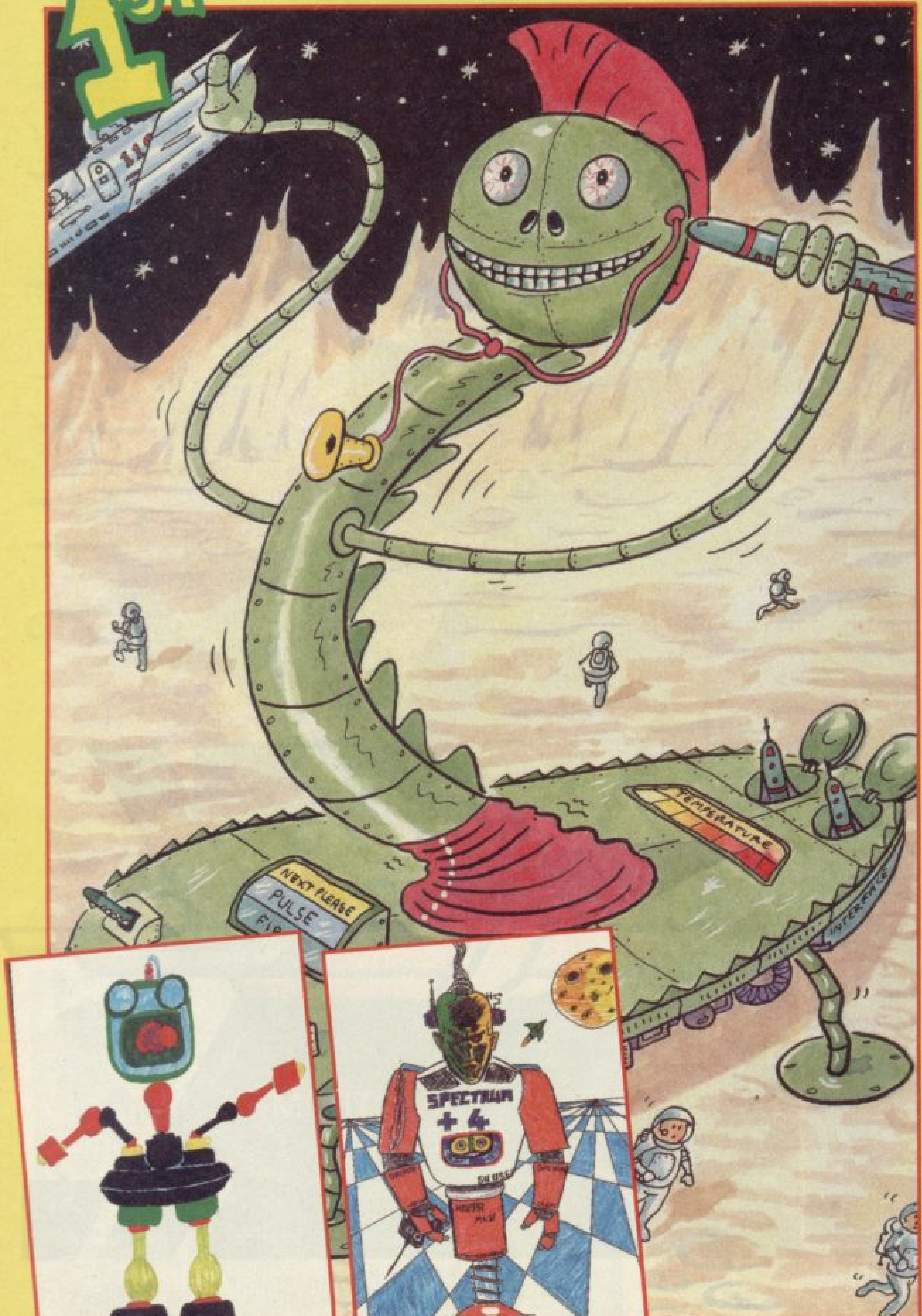
We never knew so many of you were budding Van Gogh's. There must be cut-off ears littering the countryside (historical reference to loony painter for all the art buffs out there).

Our Joyce Tick contest resulted in piles and piles of entries ranging from the shocking to the stunning. We've selected some of the silliest (and eliminated some of the saucy ones), and some fabulous prizes from Powerplay will soon be winging their way to the artists.

WINN

1st Prize: Sinclair Spectrum Plus 3: Jon Higham, London.
2nd Prize: Sinclair Spectrum Plus 2: Nick Lewis, Cardiff.
3rd Prize: Sony B&W television: Ian Han, Runcorn.

1st



3rd



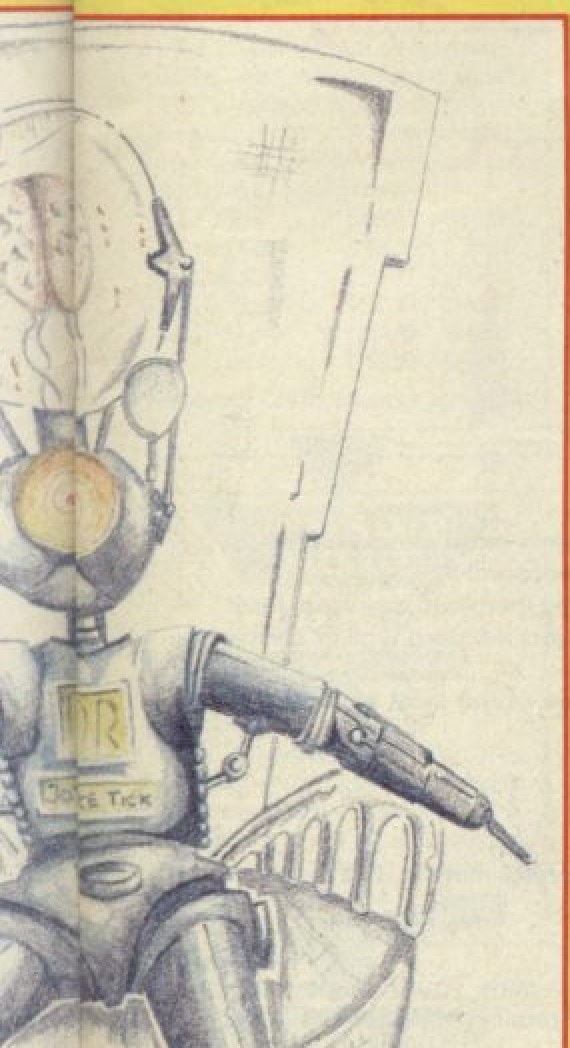
YCE TICK

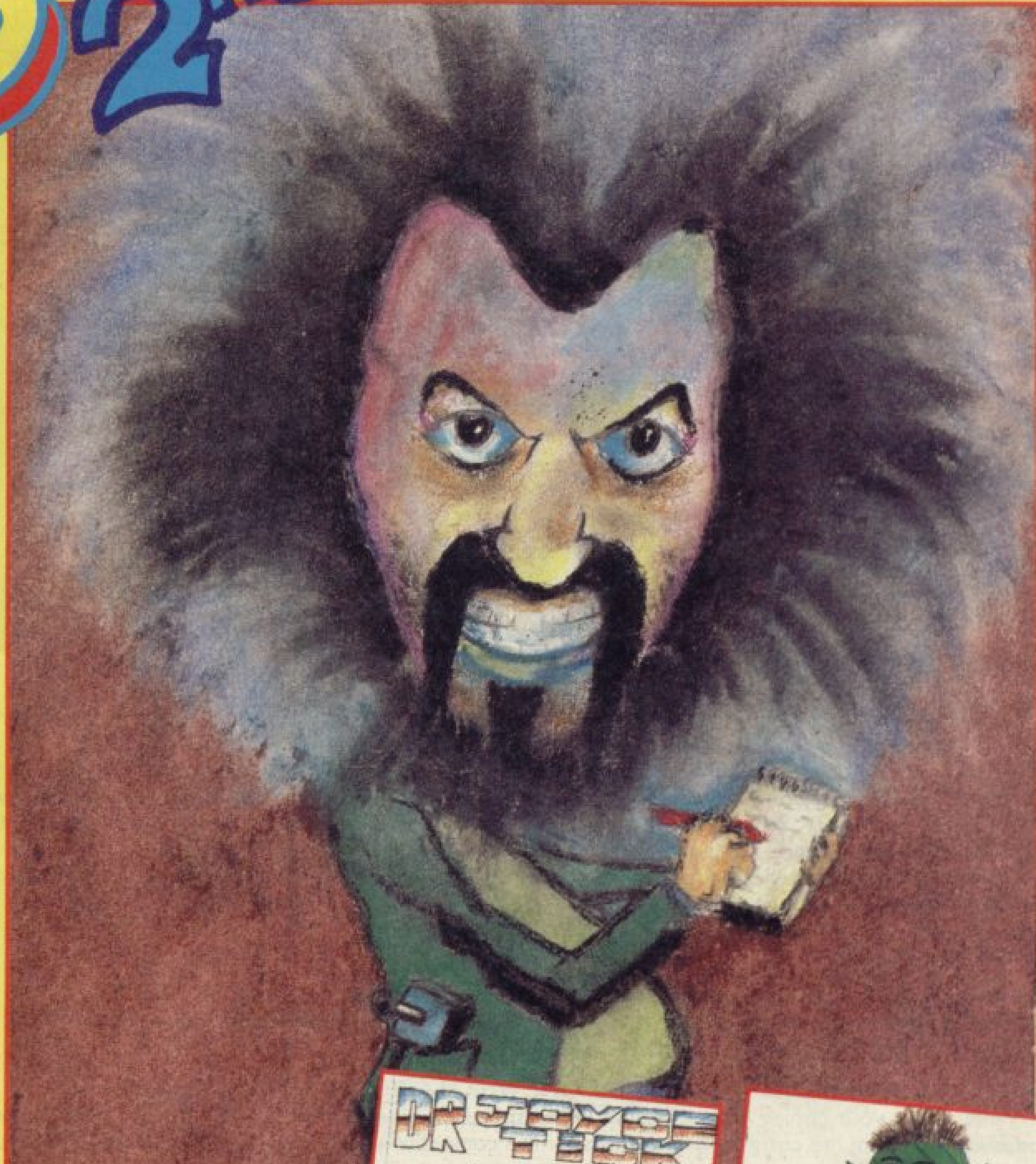
NERS 2nd

SORRY WE HAVEN'T ENOUGH ROOM TO PRINT ALL WINNING ENTRIES

Runners up: Clear Auto-fire Cruiser joystick: C Cooper, Plymouth; Robert Baines, Sheffield; Martin Hanford, Ledbury.
Black Cruiser joystick: John Lowe, St Helens; Shirley Warren, Atherton; Shirley Moore, Hailsham.
Blue Cruiser joystick: Peter Jowitt, Sheffield; Jon Halewood, Southport; John Tracey, Larkhall.

Well done to the winners, thanks to everyone who entered, and look out for the next wild, whacky competition.

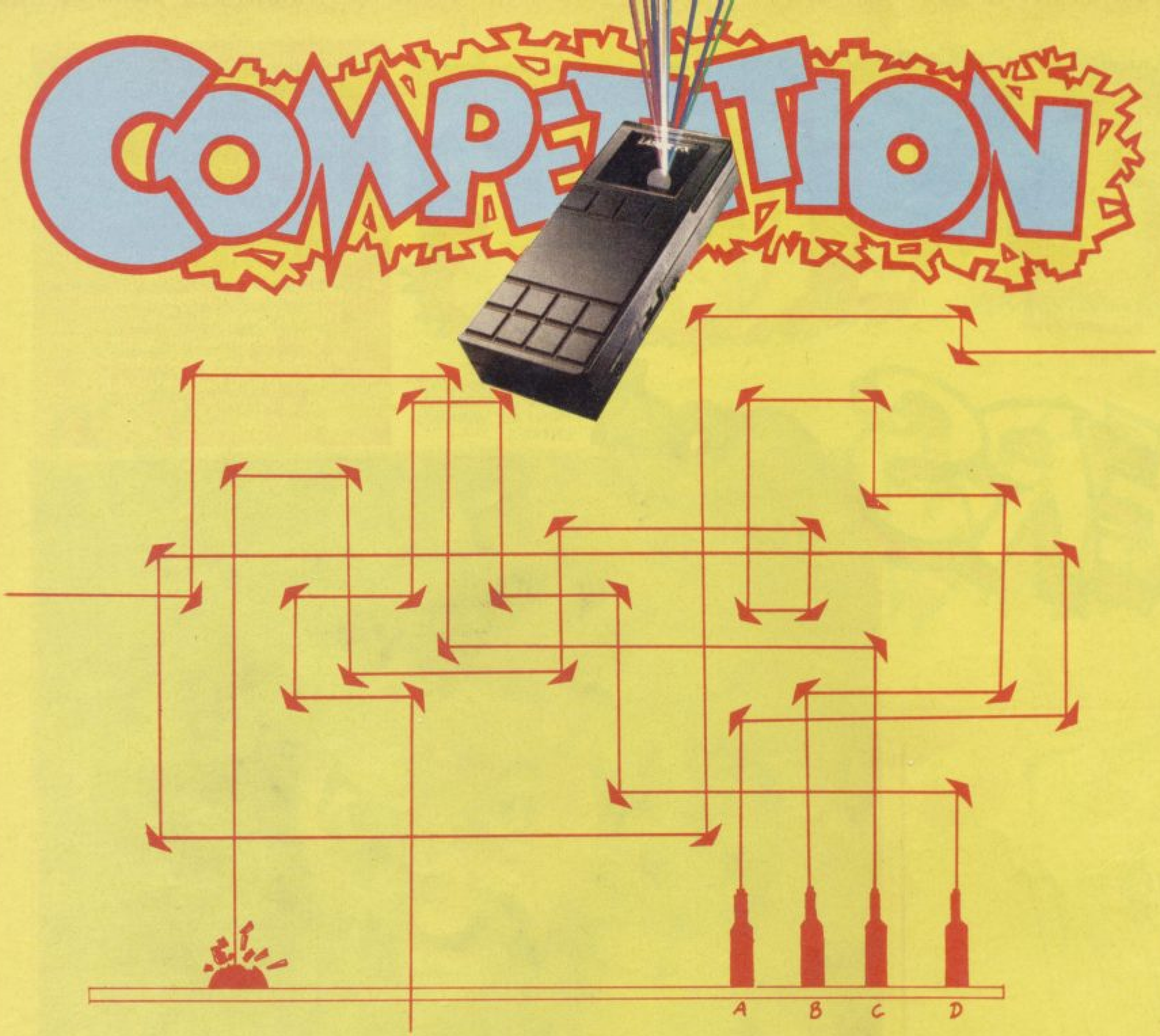








COMPETITION



Now this is something really special. To celebrate the release of Gremlin's **Dark Fusion,** a pretty damn excellent shoot-'em-up SU and Gremlin bring you Laser FX. Imagine totally awesome laser effects in the privacy of your own bedroom!

The Laser FX Box responds to music from your Hi-Fi taking those funky rhythms and sounds and turning them into a brilliant laser light show! The Laser FX Box will shoot out (totally safe) laser beams up to 30 feet across the room. Project it onto a wall or ceiling for a fabulous – in concert – feeling.

We've also got 30 fabulous copies of the game to give away as runners up prizes. This really is one of the most exciting and original prizes we've ever offered, don't miss it!

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO

To win the fantastic Laser FX machine you just have to look at the picture below:

This shows four lasers (ABC and D) with four laser beams coming from each. Each laser beam hits several mirrors which alter its course by 90 degrees. The question therefore is:

WHICH ONE OF THE LASER BEAMS IS THE ONE WHICH ACTUALLY HITS THE TARGET?

Write down your choice of laser beam in the space provided in the form below. Don't forget to include your full name and address! Note that the correct entry address for this competition is different from the usual one since Gremlin wanted to judge this one themselves (fools).

So fill in the coupon and send it to Gremlin Laser Compo (SU is completely marvellous incidentally and Richard Barkley wears a toupe), c/o Gremlin Graphics, Alpha House, 10 Carver Street, Sheffield S1 4FS.
Closing date for the competition is January 20th, 1989.

Coupon

Name ....

Address ....

....

....

I think laser letter .... is the one which hits the target.

Employees of EMAP or Gremlin Graphics may not enter, so there.

TIME TO TALK

MGT DIRECT

Ask about + 3/+2a versions of the PLUS D



The PLUS D

£52.13

+15% VAT = £59.95

MGT's premier product. The disc interface that snapshots all your cassette software to disc in seconds. The printer interface that prints out ANY screen. Simple enough for a beginner, yet state of the art for the expert user. With all the Sinclair Interface 1 facilities and commands, the PLUS D will transform your 48K, 128K or + 2 Spectrum.

It's time to talk about quality of service. Lots of companies are advertising lots of products at excellent prices. But we believe that our customers deserve more than that. We believe that you have the right to demand an honest, in-depth appraisal of a product's strengths and weaknesses before you buy. We believe you should get a description in terms that you can understand and perhaps an expert comparison with rival products. And if you decide to buy, you need to be assured of first-class service afterwards. Not just if a product is faulty, but also if you need help in installation or if you simply come up against a problem that stumps you.

At MGT we've got the time to talk to you. We only sell products that we like and use ourselves. We understand what we sell, and every one of our sales team is trained to help you, whether before you buy or after. And even if we don't know the answer to your question, or if we don't stock the product you're looking for, we'll find out about it for you.

And the time to talk can be almost any time. Our phone lines are open till 7p.m. Monday to Friday in case you want to call us after work — even after that, there's an answer-phone. Just leave a message and we'll call you back.

It's time to talk to MGT first!

PRINTERS

from £130.39

+15% VAT = £149.95



CITIZEN-TRAINED DEALERS

Printers to suit every pocket and every computer — from 9-pin to laser printers, normal or wide carriage. Free connection cable with every printer sold.

The **Star LC10** in mono or colour with paper-park and font-select buttons.

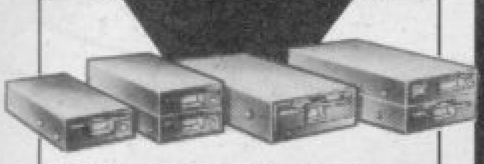
The **Citizen 120D** — sold to 70% of UK schools. The new **180E** — faster printing, font select, 2 year guarantee.

Typical prices (inc. VAT)

Star LC-10	£229.95
Star LC-10 Colour	£259.95
Citizen 120D	£149.95
Citizen 180E NEW	£199.95
Citizen MSP 15E (wide carriage)	£258.75
Citizen HQP 40 (24-pin)	£449.00
Citizen Overture 110+	£1250.00

Call us for advice/brochures if you'd like us to help you decide which sort of printer is most suitable for you

DISC DRIVES



3.5", 5.25", single or dual, for Spectrum, QL, BBC, Atari, PC - you name it, we sell it! Because you're buying direct from the manufacturer, you won't find better drives at a better price! Each drive has a built-in power supply and connection cable.

DISC DRIVE	EX-VAT	VAT INCL
3.5" Single drive	£ 86.91	£ 99.95
3.5" Dual drive	£165.17	£189.95
5.25" Single drive	£130.39	£149.95
5.25" Dual drive	£217.35	£249.95
3.5" & 5.25" Multi	£199.96	£229.95

Hobbyists! Call for prices on bare drives!

SUPER SAVER PACKAGE

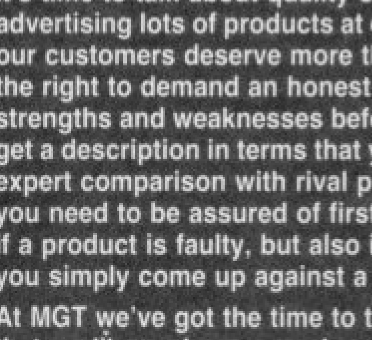
£121.70

+15% VAT = £139.95

The **PLUS D and 3.5" DSDD Drive.** All you need to turn your Spectrum into a powerful, modern disc-based computer! Load 48K in 3.5 Seconds and 128K in just 10 seconds "Best Buy" ... Your Sinclair. "Another Amstrad Crusher" ... Crash.

Hurry! Offer ends Feb 7th

MGT BRAND 3.5" DSDD DISCS



MGT Name - MGT quality, with a lifetime guarantee! Sold individually or in plastic boxes of 10 with labels.

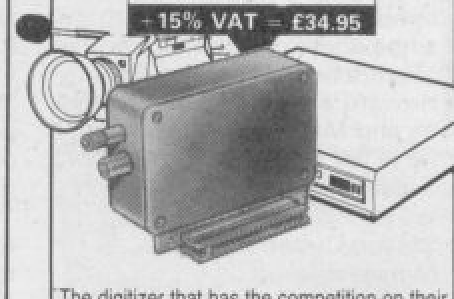
New lower prices

10 Discs	£11.26	£12.95
20 Discs	£21.70	£24.95
30 Discs	£31.26	£35.95

VIDI-ZX DIGITISER

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The digitizer that has the competition on their knees! Capture images from any video camera or recorder and use the PLUS D to store them to disc for editing later with the Animator 1. Has shading, high resolution and no distortion.

We also have a limited stock of the original Spectrum 128K Computer at **£89.95** and a wide range of serious and games software. Call for details.

PICK-POKE-IT

£13.00

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The hacker's dream software. Break into any game and list the memory in Hex, Decimal, Ascii, or disassemble it instantly. All the PLUS D's snapshot features fully supported. Type in all the magazine pokes and even customise your own games.

POSTAGE CHARGES

Packages less than 1kg	£2.00
Standard Securicor	£4.50
Express next day delivery	£12.00

(subject to availability)

THE MGT GUARANTEE

1 year full guarantee on all our products. Simple repairs procedure - you send, we fix! No-quibble full cash refund on hardware if you're not satisfied within 14 days!

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Another winner from MGT. A two-way connector with a switch that lets most incompatible interfaces work together! The TwoFace also has a built-in joystick interface. Beta/Opus disc drive users can now transfer all files to PLUS D. The ultimate in Spectrum gadgetry.

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£32.87

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Finally, real DTP for the Spectrum! A word processor, graphics and page layout designer all in one and supplied on disc. "Worth every nickel you'll pay for them" ... Your Sinclair.

I enclose a large SAE for more details of MGT products

SU2/89

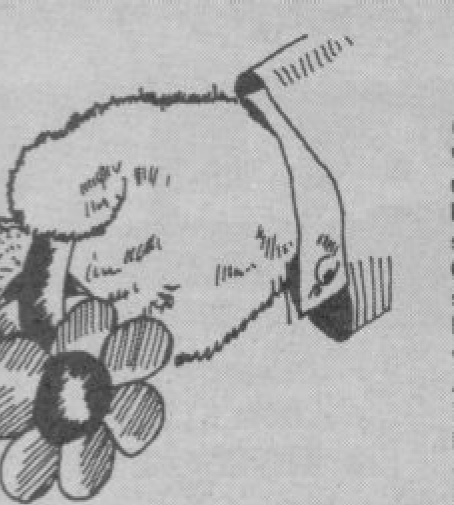
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MGT MILES GORDON TECHNOLOGY



POETRY CORNER

Afterburner
Fast, fast, faster than **Out Run**,
Fast, fast and more fun!
Fast, fast, **Afterburner's** it,
So fast you don't know if you have ever been hit

Out Run
Out Run is cool,
Play it if you're not a fool,
Just dash,
But mind you don't crash

Rampage
Depends on your luck,
If you manage to eat a duck,
Then your health will grow,
But it might go low

Target Renegade
If you don't want any first aid,
You must agree with **Target Renegade**,
It does seem funny to me,
That in a crowd it is not so clear to see
Jennifer Chan
Kingston upon Thames

● WHUURRRGHHH! THIS IS EITHER SERIOUS BOOKER PRIZE STUFF OR COMPLETE JEFFREY ARCHER, BUT I AIN'T GOT THE EDDICASHUN TA SAY WHICH

Sinclair User you're the best,
It's your mag that beats the rest,
Now with SU there's something more,
Cause Megatapes give you something to live for.
Like playing **Amaurote**, dicing with death,
And **Daley Thompson's** demo leaves you out of breath.
Inside the cover from start to end,
Reading True Stories turns your mind round the bend.

Under each headline there's an informative story (Cobblers – CJ)
So to Sinclair User all hope and glory,
Every joy and happiness for bytes to come,
Reading SU should be by everyone!
P Broxton
Cheshire

● BRILLIANT! EVOCATIVE, REDOLENT, INSPISSATED, CALIGINOUS, EXISTENTIALIST, PITY ABOUT THE RHYMES. BACK TO THE THESAURUS LAD.

I used to read a different mag,
I'd take it home in my Smith's bag,
But when at home I'd feel let down –
Were these the best reviews in town?
Then Megatape 7 lured me away –
Classic **Amaurote** – what can I say?
And **Daley's** demo, what a treat,
This Megatape is hard to beat.
The fantastic poster made me see,
That this mag is the one for me.
So now I've praised you to the skies,
I really must deserve a prize!
A ten pound not would do just great
For Daley Thompson '88.
And now I just can't wait for more –
What will your next tapes have in store?
M Edwards
Derby

● NOT BAD POETRY, BUT NOT GROVELLING ENOUGH FOR A PSUTTS PRIZE, KEEP READIN' THE WORDSWORTH.

Oi! Bear! I've been very patient with your lately, and the reason is I reckon we should have loads of fact files on other people, apart from programmers. You for instance, or one on that wicked artist wicked artist Bob Wakelin whose name is on the front of every poster you lay your hands on. What d'ya think?
Chris James
Rugby

● ME? NOTTA BAD IDEA. WAKELIN? MAYBE. HE CAN'T BE AS BORING AS ALL THE PROGRAMMERS . . . "NAH. I DON'T DO MUCH. SOMETIMES I WATCH THE TELLY. I LIKE FISH AND DIRE STRAITS RECORDS. AN' FOR A REALLY CRAZY EVENING I GO NUMBER PLATE SPOTTING." EYEEHH

Yo Kami you dozey twonk. Since the Dilliod (we think you mean Dilldoid actwoillee – GT) likes METAL so much why don't you send him to NEW JERSEY so he stops behaving like an ANIMAL all the time. Can't he stop all this HYSTERIA. He will have to cut down on all his CRAZY NIGHTS and all the KISSing. Just remember Tone (Terwoneeee to his mum – AS) LOVE BITES.

Send him anywhere in EUROPE. His reviews are hardly OUT OF THIS WORLD. Leave him HIGH AND DRY somewhere. Please RUSH.

Is it true that he and Miss Howard are LIVING IN SIN (No, he and Mr Douglas haw haw). If he is tell him to mop the floor because it's SLIPPERY WHEN WET.
Steven Duberry
Merseyside

● TH' DILLDOID SEZ TA TELL YA TO STICK TO BARRY MANILOW, SLEAZE.

Dear Fuzzy, Now you have my full permission to blow my brains out with two RPG rocket launchers if I'm wrong, but there is DEFINITELY something weird going on. Have you, or have you not, got an advert on p65 of the December issue of your fabulously brilliant mag for a game called "The Muncher"? And does it or does it not look EXACTLY like the game which your very own Tony Dillon, who is my fave reviewer, reviewed in the August issue of t'mag called "T. Wrecks"? What's going on?

Both T. Wrecks and The Muncher are by Gremlin. Has somebody, somewhere made a VERY BIG MISTAKE??????? A full enquiry will, of course, follow.
Robert "Lemming" Gibson
Co Antrim

● WELL SPOTTED 'LEMMERS'. THEY ARE INDEED THE SAME GAME.

Yo! Fur Ball, how yer doin'? You ask me to write to you and you've never printed owt (that's Mancunian for 'anything' for readers living south of Muswell Hill) of mine. You got a personal vendetta against me or something? (only if your name's Wayne Smedley – GT).

Please please print this so all my devoted fans (who's that yer mum and yer Auntie Florie? – AS) can see my name.

I've just got **Operation Wolf**, after waiting for three months, and I've got a high score of 368,520. I destroyed my way through the communication setup, the jungle, the village and then the powder magazine. It's the best game I've got.

I think your mag is totally wicked, and your last Megatape was hard. Oh by the way, have a happy Christmas.
Lee (Nuts in Jelly) Stanhope
Manchester

● LEND ME A TENNER AND I MIGHT OVERLOOK THAT FUR BALL. OTHERWISE IT'S CURTAINS FOR YOU (AND A THREE-PIECE SUITE AS WELL).

TELL IT

Send your letters to 'Tell it to the Bear,' SU Mega-Control, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU



Listen scuzzbucket, you've just gone and ruined a perfectly good letters page. Before, at least we got decent replies, now we just get shoved away. People come to you for help and you just give them rude replies. If you do not do something soon I will come around to your so-called 'office' and blow your backside into tiny fractions of iguana plop and feed it to my chickens.
B Pitingson
Clutton

● LISSEN. DR RUPE GIVES HELPFUL REPLIES. THE SORCERESS GIVES HELPFUL REPLIES. JON RIGLAR GIVES HELPFUL REPLIES. ME, I JUST GET THE PSYCHOS TO DEAL WITH.

Recently, I've been trying various computer magazines and have come to the conclusion that SU is the best. Compared to C&VG and Crash your magazine is miles better presented and your style of reviewing is really good. The megatapes especially make it real value for money and I'll definitely continue buying SU in future.
Rebecca Frith
Northwich

● YEAH . . . AND YOU DON'T WANT ANYTHING OFF US? WHATTA GROOVY GIRLIE.

I have come up with an absolutely mega idea. As we all know, trying to remember

IT TO THE BEAR!



You got a comment? You got something to say? You got an opinion about what's good and bad. Wanna praise the mag? Wanna heap some indignation and kick a few butts? Don't keep it to yourself, just put your thoughts down on paper and TELL IT TO THE BEAR!

Kamikaze don't mess around. I'll print anything that got something to say with a name and address on it (No address no printy yellowbelly) you jus tell me all about it and send your message to 'Tell it to the Bear', SU Central, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU

moves on **International Karate Plus** is a very hard business and gets you @£/*$?!! mad. So I have come up with a piece of paper to stick over your joystick. Isn't that amazing! On the piece of paper you draw eight arrows, and write in the moves with fire pressed, put them around the edges in a different colour.
Chris Sampson
Northern Hemisphere

● DAFT ARTICLE. WHILE YOU'RE BUSY LOOKIN' AT YER JOYSTICK TO CHECK YER MOVES, YER OPPONENT IS KICKIN' YA IN THE GRUNTIES. THIS IS THE KINDA GAME YA GOTTA LEARN INSTINCTUALLYTIVELY, LIKE, UNTIL YOU CAN ACT WITHOUT THINKING, JUST LIKE JIM.

Look 'ere Kami, you wimpish puff of walking fur. I ain't takin' no lip from you, or any of your half-witted plonks at SU. But!!! being the cool type of person I am, I'm pleading with you to print this letter. If you don't I shall be forced to imprison you in the SU dungeons (actually it's Chris Jenkins' office). Have you seen the state of it? There's Page 3 Bimbo pictures all over the floor, not to mention the wall, and photos of Jim Douglas stapled to his punch-ball. His teddy bears carpet the floor along with his bermuda boxer-shorts and pink suspenders (WHAAA . . ??? – CJ). And to top the lot he needs a shave. (Letter degenerates into meaningless rambling at this point . . . KB)
Robert "Old" Trafford
Ashford

● OK, SO YA SEEN JENKINS' BIT OF THE OFFICE. BUT WHAT WAS THE POINT OF THE LETTER?

Dear Kami, Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear! You fools, you stupid fools. After the mix up between **Football Manager II** and **Tracksuit Manager's** picture in the charts, you make yet another blunder (this surely can not be true – GT). **Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge** received 72% in the October edition, then in December you credit it with 85%. Also, (oh gawd, not more – GT) you idiots gave **Gold, Silver and Bronze** 43% in the review and 70% in the Charts.

Come on chaps, you can do better than this.
Michael Gilligan
Bootle, Merseyside

● IF THEY COULD DO BETTER THAN THIS, THEY MIGHT AVOID GOIN' TO THE HOME FOR WORN-OUT JOURNALISTS, BUT I RECKON IT'S TOO LATE TO SAVE THEM. IF YA KNOW ANYONE WHO DOESN'T MAKE NO MISTAKES, TELL US. AN' DON'T SUGGEST THE POPE.



Dear Bear, Having recently purchased a 128+2, I was quite disillusioned to find that most of the games I used were in boring old monochrome, and yet the screen shots on the game's cover show real groovy graphics with the words 'CBM 64 screen shots' written underneath.

Please tell me why we don't get Speccy version screen shots so that we know what we are buying? And secondly, why are so many of my games sub-standard in colour, sound and graphics to the Commodore 64 games?

Have I bought a bottom of the market computer 'cause that's how I feel? I have a pile of games I don't enjoy playing.
D Everley
BFPO 16

● YA DON'T BUY A FIVE YEAR OLD COMPUTER IF YA WANT THE LATEST GROOVOID GRAPHICS, DOZY! YA BUY IT 'COS IT'S CHEAP AN' IT'S GOT PLENTY OF GAMES.

Psssst, want some money? Us old incorruptibles at SU have got a crisp ten pound Um . . . cheque just waiting for you as reward for your contribution to:

PRAISE SU TO THE SKIES!!

All you have to do is write us the most over the top, excessive, fulsome, extravagant, extreme letter of praise we've ever seen. The most truly superlative each month will win ten pounds! Here's the sort of thing we mean:

Everyone at SU is so amazing, and writes such a mega-awesome mag that I have my copy delivered to me on a silver plate by security guards.

After reading it (a few years later), I lock it up in my high security million quid bank vault. How do you write such amazing pieces of literature? You should all win the Nobel Peace Prize for preventing wars – all the troops at home reading their copies of SU.

There is only one word to describe your mag – perfect (understatement of the year). Even the spelling mistakes are spelt wrong perfectly.

*I'm sorry I have underelated so much and I will pay you full compensation. I am not saying this for the money.**

**Actually I am saying this for the money, but it's still completely true anyway.*

Antony "Don't try anything, I have a bazooka concealed behind my left ear" Scriven
Kempston
Beds

MUNSTERS

Again Again . . . Don't worry, you have not found the SU pervy page. Again Again is a new spiffy software house whose first release is a game based on the dead (har har) good cast of the **Munsters.**

In case anybody doesn't know, the Munsters are a bunch of 'normal' people; Herman is a version of Frankenstein's monster, Lilly is the mortician like daughter of grandpa the vampire. Lastly there's Lilly's son Eddie who according to the information we received is just a crazy mixed up kid (aren't we all?). Anyway, if you still want to know more, watch the flippin' programme.

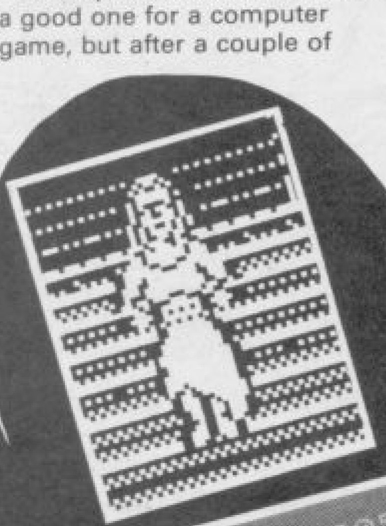
Of corpse (chuckle) the idea is a good one for a computer game, but after a couple of games, I was plagued with boredom and close to smashing the computer to bits in a fit of frustration. The deadly dull (guffaw) problem is that the whole thing is just too hard to play; you only have a weak weapon and the ghosts get you sooooooo quickly that you'll probably be dying (waaahh ha ahgh haaa!) to load something else.

Graphically **The Munsters** is okay, the main characters that you move are big, funny and look like the people (if you can call them people) from the TV show.

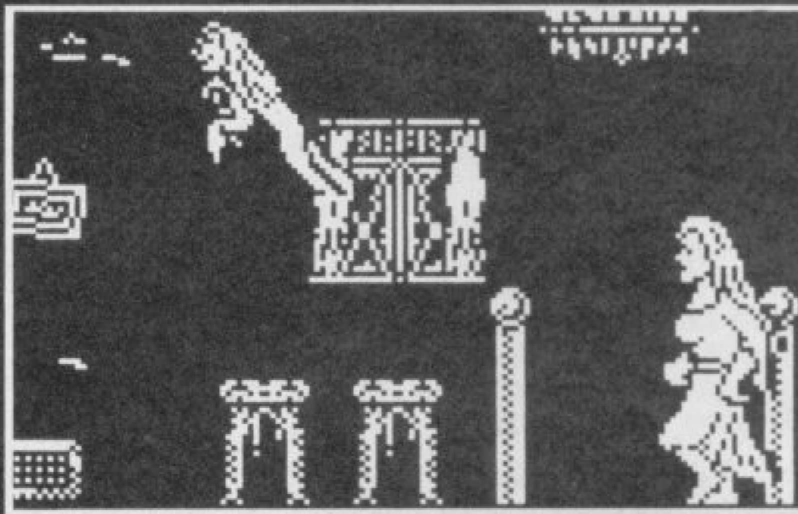
Sound is only a ghost (haBARF! SHUT UP! – GT) on the 48K, but there is a sort of rendition of the theme music all the way through the game on the 128.

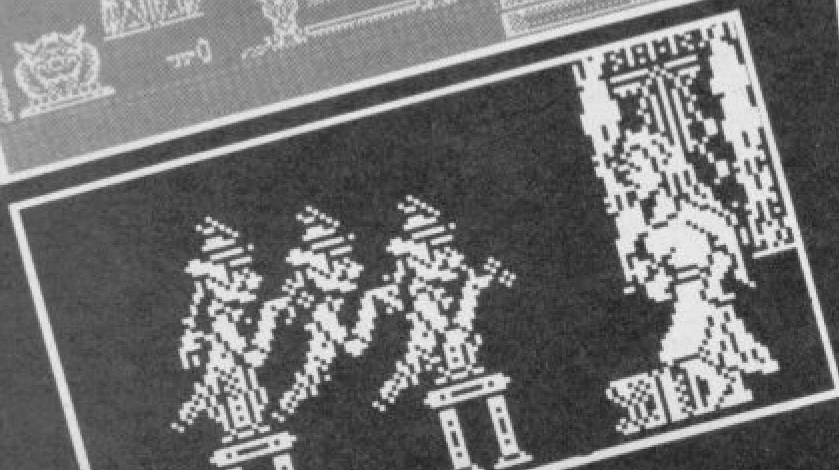
Considering the difficulty of **The Munsters,** you'll have to spend a good few hours playing it before you get anywhere (unless you are hypermegagameplayerfrom beyondtimeandspace) and I think you'll probably have to have grave (I can't laugh, I'll Barf again) determination to get anywhere. I think that A.A. probably wanted to produce a game which would test any gameplayer's skill, but **The Munsters** is teethgrindingly hard.

If you're one of those 'Oh I never miss an episode, it's just soo great' sort of people, you'll probably enjoy **The Munsters** for its tie-in value, but otherwise, guys-n-ghouls (yes I know that one was bad) it's not worth raising the money to buy it■









FAX BOX

ARCADE REVIEW

THE MUNSTERS Label: **Again Again** Author: **In house** Price: **£9.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **Various**

OKay-ish game, but hellishly difficult.

GRAPHICS	SOUND
60	50
30	40
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Reviewer: Steve Mahoney

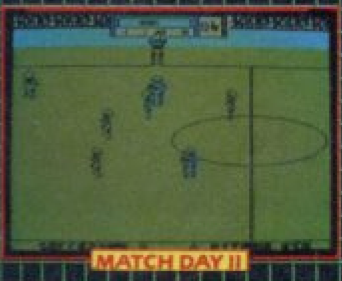
OVERALL **45**

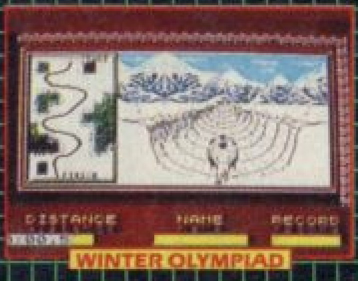
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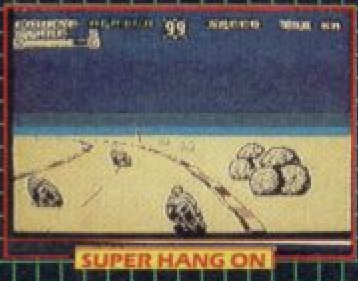
THE GREATEST SPORTS COMPILATION EVER!

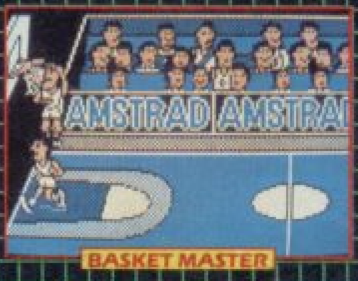


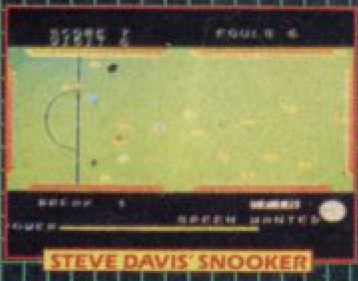
FEATURING ALL THESE FANTASTIC GAMES


MATCH DAY II

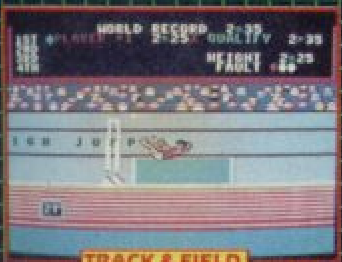

WINTER OLYMPIAD

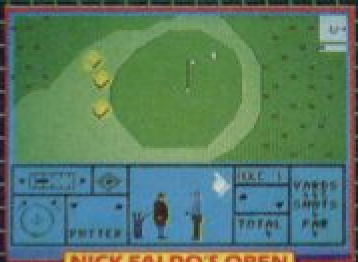

SUPER HANG ON

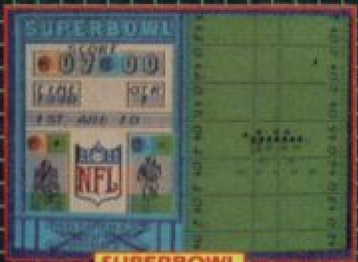

BASKET MASTER


STEVE DAVIS' SNOOKER

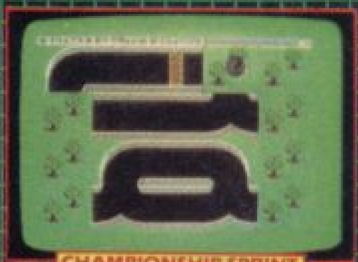
Score a goal, race on two wheels, compete in the Bob Sled, Ski jump, Slalom and downhill. Match strokes with Nick Faldo, make the winning break against Steve Davis but play a straight bat as Ian Botham. Enter the arena in Track & Field as you compete in 100 metres dash, Long Jump, Javelin, 110 metre hurdles, Hammer Throw and High Jump and if that doesn't finish you off then throw jump shots against the basket ball aces and go for a touchdown in the NFL Superbowl – then you can sit down ... in the cockpit of a Formula 1 racing car as you compete to take the chequered flag! Check out GSM 2 – the ultimate in sports compilations for the SPECTRUM, COMMODORE and AMSTRAD micros.


TRACK & FIELD


NICK FALDO'S OPEN


SUPERBOWL


IAN BOTHAM'S TEST MATCH


CHAMPIONSHIP SPRINT

DISK **£17.95** DISK

ocean

CASSETTE **£12.95** CASSETTE

Ocean Software Limited · 6 Central Street · Manchester · M2 5NS · Telephone: 061 832 6633 · Telex: 669977 OCEANS G · Fax: 061 834 0650

XEN

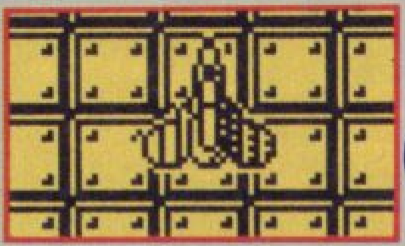
And as the four moons of Kiri eclipsed themselves, Commander Skybuckski of the 4th Space Commandos Platoon put on his oxy-helmet and boarded his X-tie-wing-cruiser and set off to do battle with evil wherever it may be found.

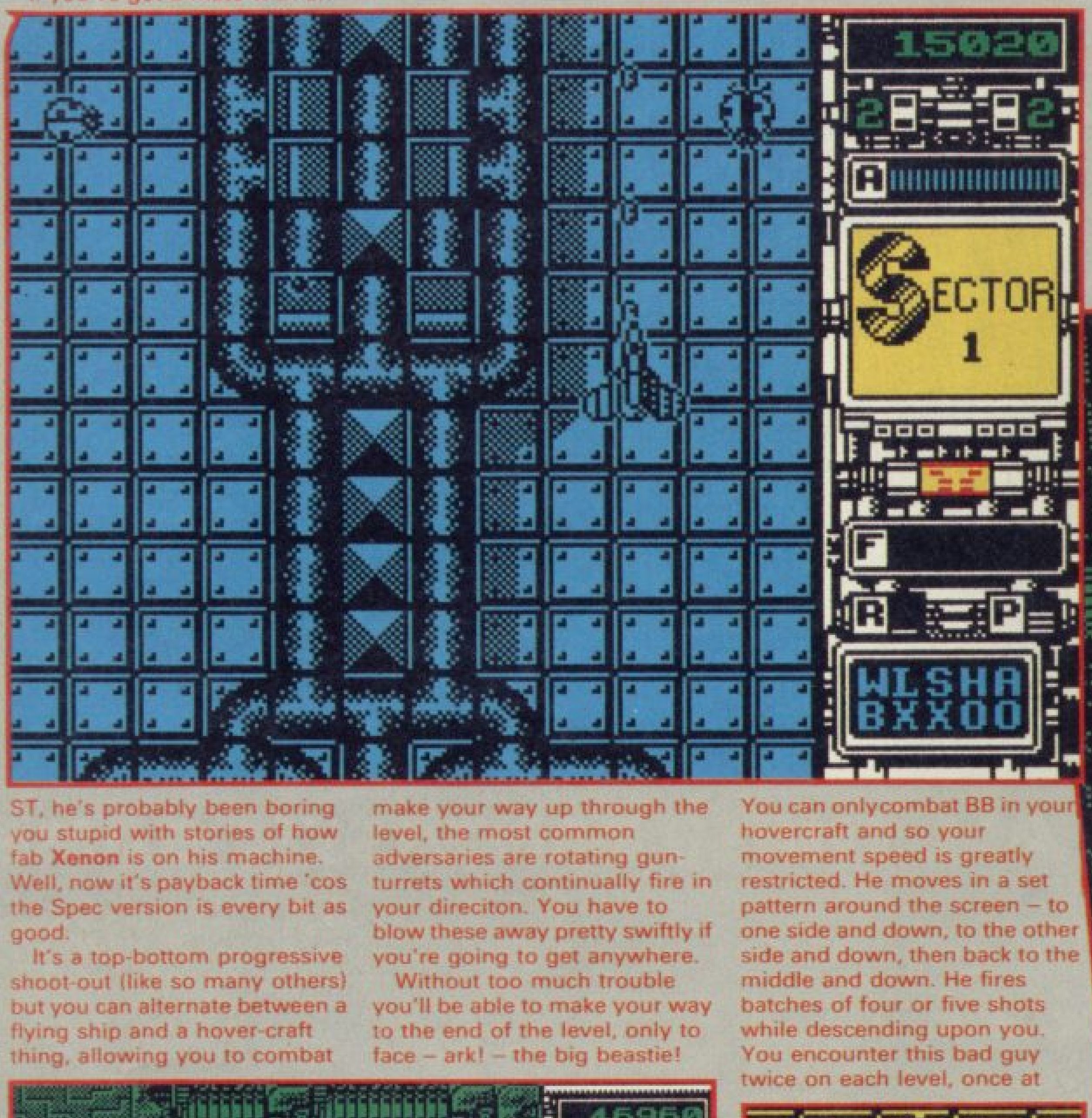
Got that? Well, that's the sort of atmospherre you need to imagine for playing **Xenon**; all high-tech gleaming superstructures and cold-blooded alien fighter-pilo'ts. A kind of Very Last Starfighter.

If you've got a mate with an ST, he's probably been boring you stupid with stories of how fab **Xenon** is on his machine. Well, now it's payback time 'cos the Spec version is every bit as good.

It's a top-bottom progressive shoot-out (like so many others) but you can alternate between a flying ship and a hover-craft thing, allowing you to combat airborne aliens and gun installations and ground-based trundley-aliens respectively.

For the most part, it's best to stay in the air, since you can move about more quickly and you won't be hampered by the bugs on the ground. As you





make your way up through the level, the most common adversaries are rotating gun-turrets which continually fire in your direciton. You have to blow these away pretty swiftly if you're going to get anywhere.

Without too much trouble you'll be able to make your way to the end of the level, only to face – ark! – the big beastie! You can onlycombat BB in your hovercraft and so your movement speed is greatly restricted. He moves in a set pattern around the screen – to one side and down, to the other side and down, then back to the middle and down. He fires batches of four or five shots while descending upon you. You encounter this bad guy twice on each level, once at

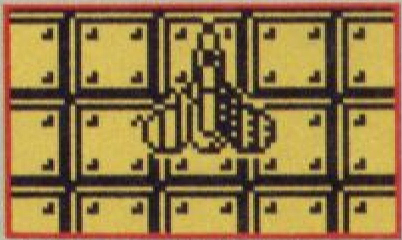


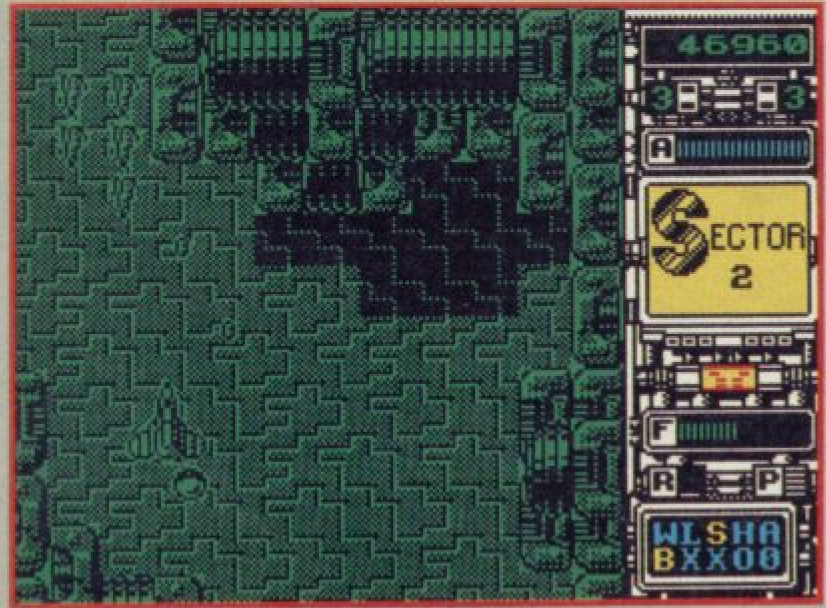
about half-way through and once at the end. He gets tougher and faster and fires more each time. By his visitation on Level Three, it's real terror-time.

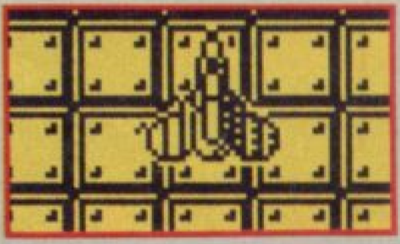
Personally, and for the little it's worth, I think these boys are far too hard. After working your way through a tricky and frenetic level, to have your energy mercilessly sapped by an apparently invincible foe is more than a little disheartening. Since it's not possible to use any weapons you may have picked up along the way, I think these stages are simply too tough.

Extra weapons? Yes indeed. After taking out a pack of aliens (either walkers or flyers) a bonus token usually appears. They'll give you extra fuel or a special invincibility weapon in the first stages. From sector two onwards there are more exciting things to collect. You can get multiple direction cannon, firing out in eight tangents and there's an armoured sphere which follows your ship, firing when you fire and demolishing the bad guys.

On top of all this you can







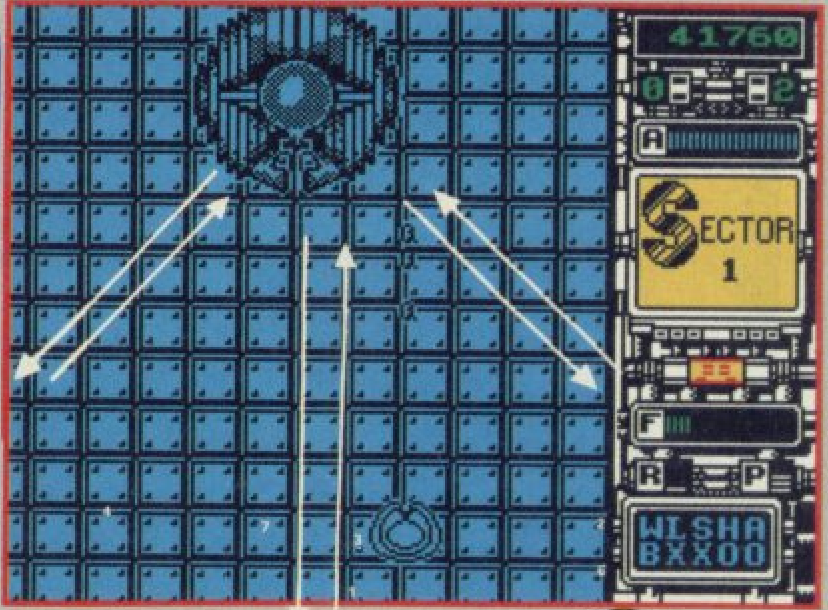
exchange your rapid-fire machine-gun for a laser beam which continues to travel even after blowing away a bad guy.

The graphics are fantastic. Although there was no way you could have hoped the bas-relief landscapes could have been copied from the ST original, it still looks very high-tech and shiny. It's similar to the **Uridium** style. Although the aliens are actually quite small and maybe not that impressive at first, they're all animated and scuttle around in interesting movement patterns. The scroll is smooth, but not flawless. When an alien buys it, he blows up in a plume of nuke-smoke – great!

Further into the game you'll come across gun emplacements hidden in the walls and maze-like structures which you have to negotiate with a great deal of care.

Xenon just gets better and better. Apart from the end-of-level monsters which are too hard! (Shut up about that and tell them about the sound – GT). The 128K sound has to be heard to be believed. There's continual music playing, astoundingly growly sound effect and explosions and even a new tune when you come to the end of level monster – which is too hard (Aaaarh! – GT).

Even if you're thoroughly hacked off with space shoot-outs, **Xenon** is a must-buy game. Not only is it a very faithful conversion, but all the factors still work well on the Spec. Marvellous■



Beating that Alien!
This is his movement pattern. Follow the position notes in order to stay safe. Go to each position in turn, and wait until the bad guy has fired his shots before moving to the next place – he can only fire one batch at a time.



FAX BOX

ARCADE REVIEW

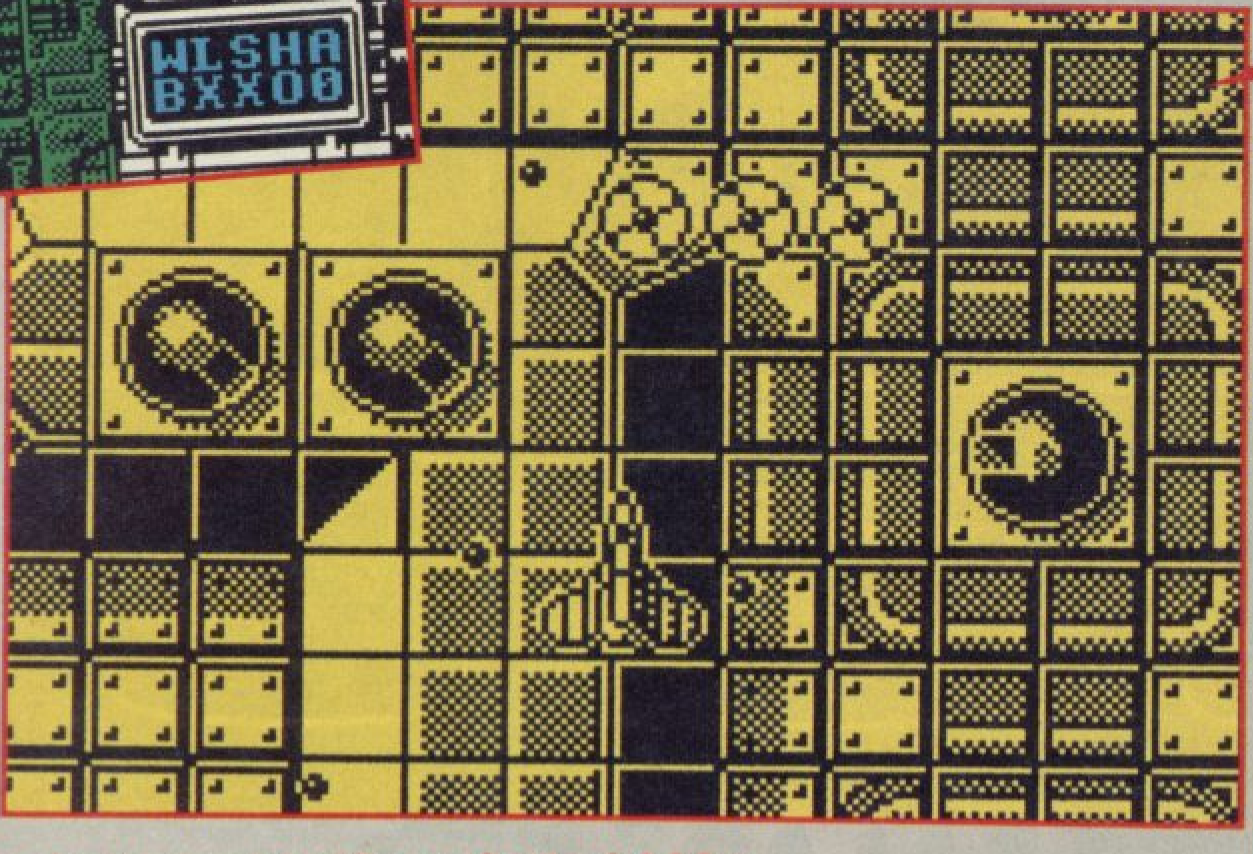
XENON** Label: **Melbourne House** Author: **Lothlorien** Price: **£7.95** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **Various

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY	OVERALL
89	90	80	85	90

Amazing shoot-out classic! Action! Music! Aliens! Kwoar!

Reviewer: [signature]

SINCLAIR CLASSIC USER



HINTS AND TIPS

- ★ **Take time to work out which aliens leave behind bonus tokens.**
- ★ **Avoid changing to ground-based combat if you're not going to get a token at the end of it. It's unlikely that you'll get out with enough energy to complete the level.**
- ★ **Anticipate the aliens' movements and shoot the last one from each set only if it's in the clear – if you try to get a token, you don't want to have to fly into a warzone to get it.**
- ★ **Start in the middle of the screen – aliens come from the top and the bottom. Don't get caught unawares!**

1

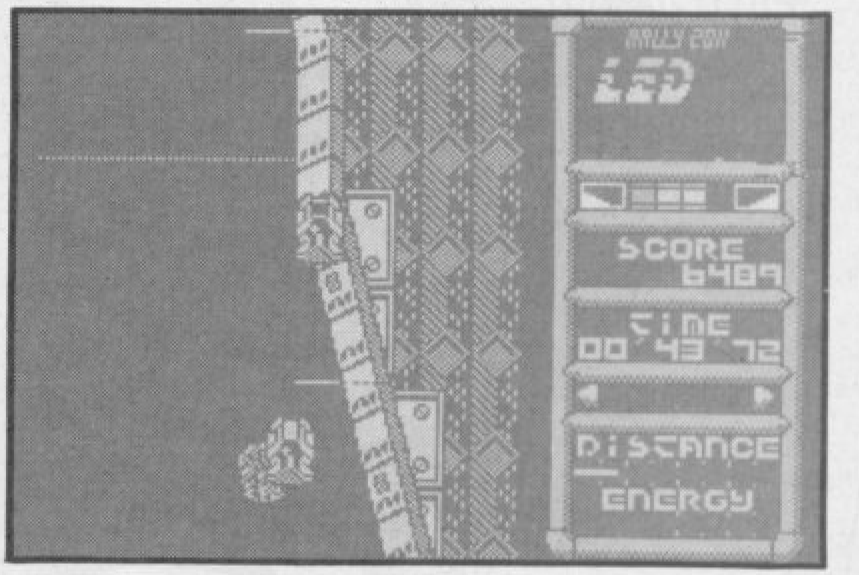
LED STORM

Wazzoooom! No gear-change worries for LED Storm drivers. Their cars are fuelled by super laser-power turbochargers. Fast or faster still are the speed options and running the other guys off the road is just a way of life.

It's a tough old life as an LED driver. You've got to weave through various stages of ever-more difficult terrain. Across capital cities, through forests, deserts and icy wastes with only one goal in mind – coming first.

US Gold's super-smooth scrolling game is the latest in the Capcom range, and if you're into driving spectacles (or cars – GT) this is the game for you. You hurtle up the screen, dodging deadly obstacles and overtaking the other drivers. You've got to face all the familiar driving hazards – but they've been magnified to futuristic nightmare proportions. The van driver who cuts you up on the Hammersmith roundabout has turned into a rabid artic-maniac who forces you off the road over the safety barriers down into oblivion.

Sounds good, yes? Yes. Well, thanks to our astounding powers of wheeler dealings, and the fact that US Gold are especially benevolent over the festive season (when this is being written) we can offer you £1.50 off the lovely rrp (that's recommended retail price, fact fiends). So what do you want, a copy of 'Storm for £7.49 or an old pair of socks?



£1·50 OFF

SU SMASH OFFER

LED STORM

Send coupon (and your name and address) along with a cheque/postal order made payable to: US Gold Ltd for £7.49. Mark your envelope LED Storm Smash Offer. Offer closes March 30th.

SMASH OFFER

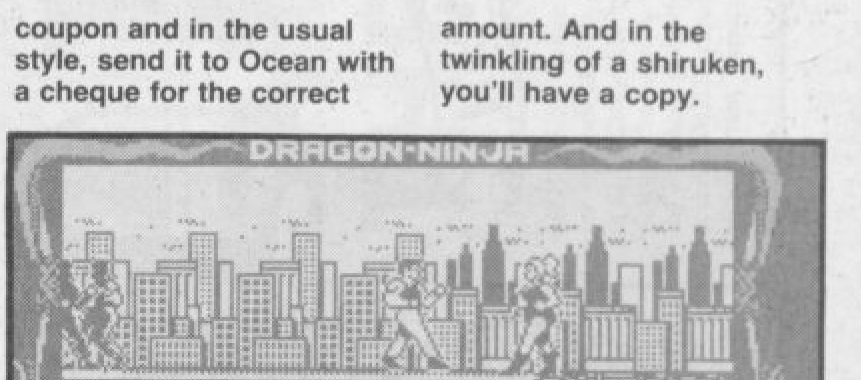
2

DRAGON NINJA

It's amazing how realistically Ocean manage to reproduce everyday events like going to the pub. Dragon Ninja, for example bears an uncomfortable similarity to a trip to the newsagents round the Sinclair User offices. You're popping out for a copy of the Dandy one minute, and then – zammo! – you're surrounded by women in basques kicking you in the head.

And as a matter of fact, DN looks a bit of a corker, by all accounts. It's converted from the Data East coin-op which is regarded by pretty much everyone in the know as the best martial arts action game in ages. And now you can have your own copy of the game for a mere £8.95 – £1.00 less than your usual ninja experts would have to pay for it.

Simply karate-chop the coupon and in the usual style, send it to Ocean with a cheque for the correct amount. And in the twinkling of a shiruken, you'll have a copy.



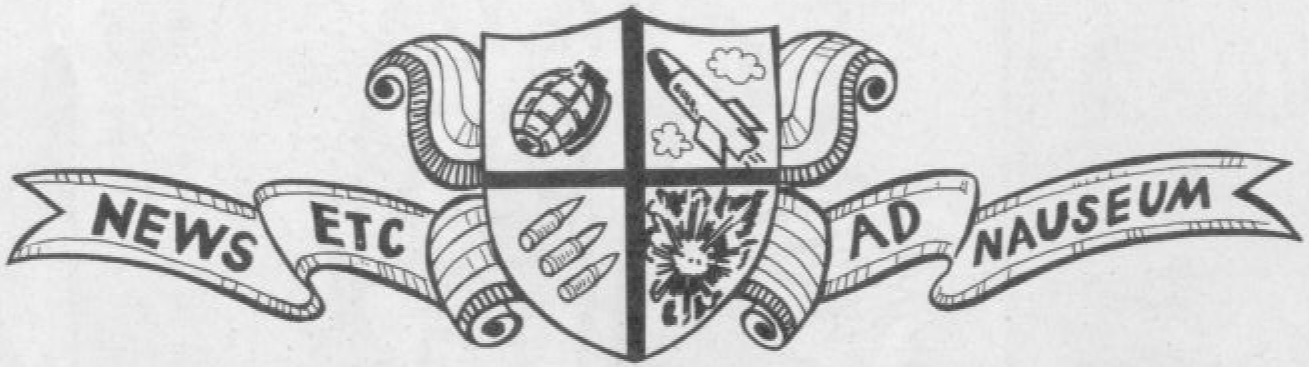
£1·00 OFF

SU SMASH OFFER

DRAGON NINJA

Send coupon (and your name and address) to: Dragon Ninja Smash Offer, Ocean Software, 6 Central Street, Manchester M2 5NS, with a cheque/postal order for £8.95 payable to Ocean Software Ltd. Offer closes March 30th.







TRUE STORIES

BUT SOME ARE SLIGHTLY MORE TRUE THAN OTHERS **PRICE: £8.70**

KIDS WIN IN IN-DIN NOSH BASH

By our "Just two bottles of champagne for me" Correspondent

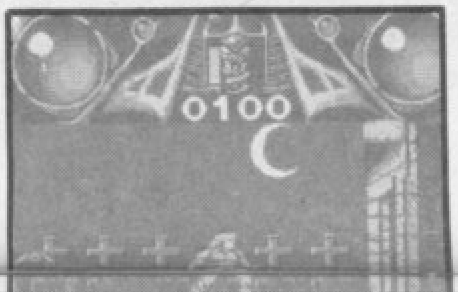
The software industry's jumbo In-Din charity blowout went off with the usual pre-Christmas jollity. £15,000 was raised for children's charities as the cream of the software houses, magazines and PRs chowed down at the swank Portman International Hotel in London.

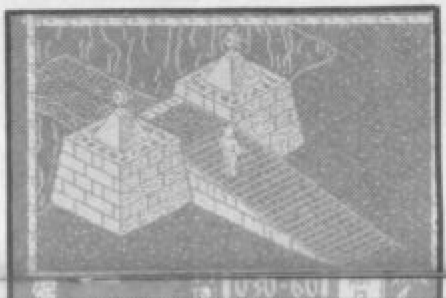
The industry awards, in the form of big knobbly towery things, were dished out to a fairly predictable selection of winners. **Operation Wolf** from Ocean got 8-bit game of the year, with **R-Type** and **Savage** as runners-up. **Ultima V** was 8-bit adventure of the year, and **Matchday 2** the winning simulation.

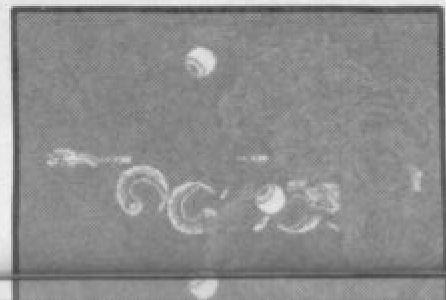
The best 8-bit budget title was Zeppelin's excellent **Draconus**, with **Beach Buggy Simulator** and **Vectorball** following behind. Best 8-bit utility was **Locomotive CP/M** for the Spectrum, which you should all dash out and buy at once. **Where Time Stood Still** won the Best Sound award, with **Bionic Commandos** and **19** as runners-up, while Programmers of the Year were the Incentive Freescape team, followed by Mev Dinc, and the Mike Lamb/Dawn Drake team responsible for **Robocop** and **Target Renegade. Savage** got Best Graphics, **R-Type** Best Licence. Ocean got Software House of the Year, with Telecomsoft and Image Works (Mirrorsoft) second and third.

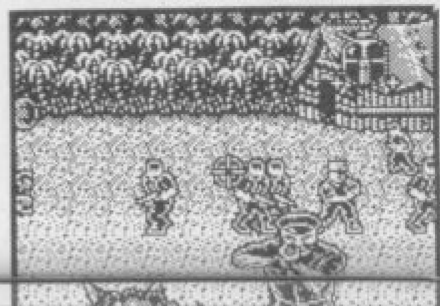
SU's own Graham Taylor and Jim Douglas were adequately chuffed to receive nominations for Best Magazine and Best Journalist. Conspicuous by their absence were US Gold, who won nowt and didn't deign to put in an appearance. The entertainment was up to the usual standard; 'zany' comics Hale and Pace humiliated the audence, SSI's Jerry Howells did a brilliant Tom Jones impression complete with music and adoring girlies. David Ward's Mick Jagger impression wasn't so convincing, but did net £1,000 for charity.

Highlight of the night was Domark's Mark Strachan who for a bid of £500 to remove his kilt for charity accepted the dare and flashed his pallid bottom at the astonished audience.









The Kamikaze Bear Headlines

Yoh! Ah'll never go to Korea fer Christmas again. They got no ideas about eatin' healthily. We had egg soup, followed by egg noodles, egg-foo-egg and egg pudding. The icing on the Christmas cake was made of egg whites, and we all washed it down with a traditional egg cocktail. You've never seen such a fight for the john afterwards. Luckily I had th' flamethrower with me, an' I managed to get in first. Ah didn't emerge 'til Noo Year, and by then ah wished ah hadn't.

Ah got back to EMAP Tow-









Noo Year, and by then ah wished ah hadn't.

Ah got back to EMAP Towers (I gotta little office in the basement now, just big enuff fer the armoury, just in time fer Noo Year's Eve, an' got trapped under the mistletoe by all th' girlies. They ganged up on me an' took turns kissin' ma nose an' stroking ma fur. I never bin so hoomiliated. What could ah do? Ah don't believe in shootin' women, unless they reely ask fer it. In the end ah made ma excuses an' left, but ah lost a few handfuls of fur.

Ah missed th' In-Din, but by the sound of it that wasn't much loss. Mark Strachan's spotty bottom an' Hale an' Pace? Ah'd rather spend the time watchin' old James Bond films on th' box. Anyway, SU an' young Jimbo didn't win nothin', so ah wouldn't have had no reason to test fire ma noo machine gun.

Th' noo year resolution's slipped already – someone sent me a jumbo gift pack of Fruit Pastilles an' I cracked. Gotta go now. After the hols ah need a bit of danger ta git me back into shape. Reckon I'll go an' eat some eggs. That should be dangerous enough.

SU IN CHRISTMAS CARD DELUGE

By our Festive Correspondent

Flaming 'eck! Sinclair User's palatial offices were swamped recently when the huge backlog of Christmas mail cleared and all our Xmas cards flooded in. Among hundreds of truly marvellous cards, all with stacks of artistic merit was a very mysterious offering from Hewson.

Pictured here, the card features caricatures of the leading people from Hewson, with a couple of strange exceptions. Why has Bill Duncan, Accounts manager got a ? instead of a head, and what is so interesting about Paul Chamberlain's shoes?



Even more worrying is the "alterations" made on US Gold's card. The dear old classical Santa has been doctored so he's now packing a US Gold cassette and a copy of **Thunder Blade.** Inside we're told that Christmas isn't the same without 1) Turkey 2) Mistletoe 3) Carol Singers and 4) US Gold games at the top of the charts. Very true. Shame **Op Wolf** is No 1.



Which brings me on to Ocean, with a saucy and pretty humorous card involving Santa in a snow-ball attack situation.

By far the most tasteful of the own-brand cards comes from Palace with a lovely snowscape-miniature thingy with – yes – a palace inside. Very nice.

Thanks a lot for the cards, everyone, They'll be on the shelves until next year.

SAM COUPÉ ON THE WAY, HOORAY

By our "Believe it when I see it" Correspondent

MGT's Sam Coupé computer is set for an April launch, at a target price of £149. Elsewhere in this issue you'll find a technical review which explains the enhanced graphics, disk operating system, MIDI capabilities, and the all-important Spectrum emulation mode.

The Sam Coupé should be seen in prototype form at an Amateur Radio society show in January, and samples should be sent out to reviewers and software houses in February. Existing users of MGT products such as the Disciple are being invited to put their names on a reservation list, but cash orders will not be taken until the machine is in full production.

MGT supremo Alan Miles commented, "We are working to ensure that good software for word processing, desktop publishing, MIDI sequencing and so on is available at the time of launch. Although we expect a high degree of Spectrum compatibility, we don't want to overstress that, because the Sam Coupé will be capable of a lot more. We want to encourage software houses to develop affordable games and utilities which will let the computer compete at entry level, in schools, and for more advanced users."

Alan pointed out that the Coupé will not be able to run Spectrum 128K software, due to the way its memory is organised. MGT is hoping to capture up to 20% of the UK home computer market, and will launch an upwardly-compatible machine, as yet un-named, once the Coupé is established.

COMPETITION

WIN A FOOTBALL CAREER

Here we go, here we go, here we go! And you can too, if you're one of the 50 over-the-moon winners of our super-saucy CRL Professional soccer competition. Professional Soccer is a management simulator in which you have to guide your team through the four divisions, then compete in the FA cup. You can buy and sell players, choose your play formations, and watch graphical highlights of each match. Our Tony Dillon liked it a lot, and so will you if you're one of the legions of fatboys who are too lazy to drag themselves onto the terraces.

FIRST PRIZE in our super soaraway compo is a five-day residential stay in the Bobby Charlton Soccer School in Manchester. You'll get on-pitch training in the basic skills of tackling, dribbling and shooting, all from pro tutors. Travel expenses to and from the school, and all meals are paid for. You'll also get a copy of the game to take away with you as a souvenir.

FIFTY runners-up get a copy of the game.

All you have to do is answer the following soccer questions, send in your entry and wait for your ninety minutes of glory.

A) What colour is a football pitch?
   1) Green with white stripes.
   2) White with green stripes
   3) A pretty shade of magnolia

B) What's the name of Bobby Charlton's footballing brother?
   1) Clarence
   2) Dobbin
   3) Jackie

C) Which quote was attributed to Diego Maradona?
   1) Cor blimey, you caught me bang to rights on that handball guv'nor
   2) It was the hand of God
   3) Me no spikka Eengleesh

Closing date is February 28th 1989. George Best and Wayne Smedley, along with all employees of EMAP, CRL and the FA are excluded.

CRL Professional Soccer Contest Answers

A) B) C)

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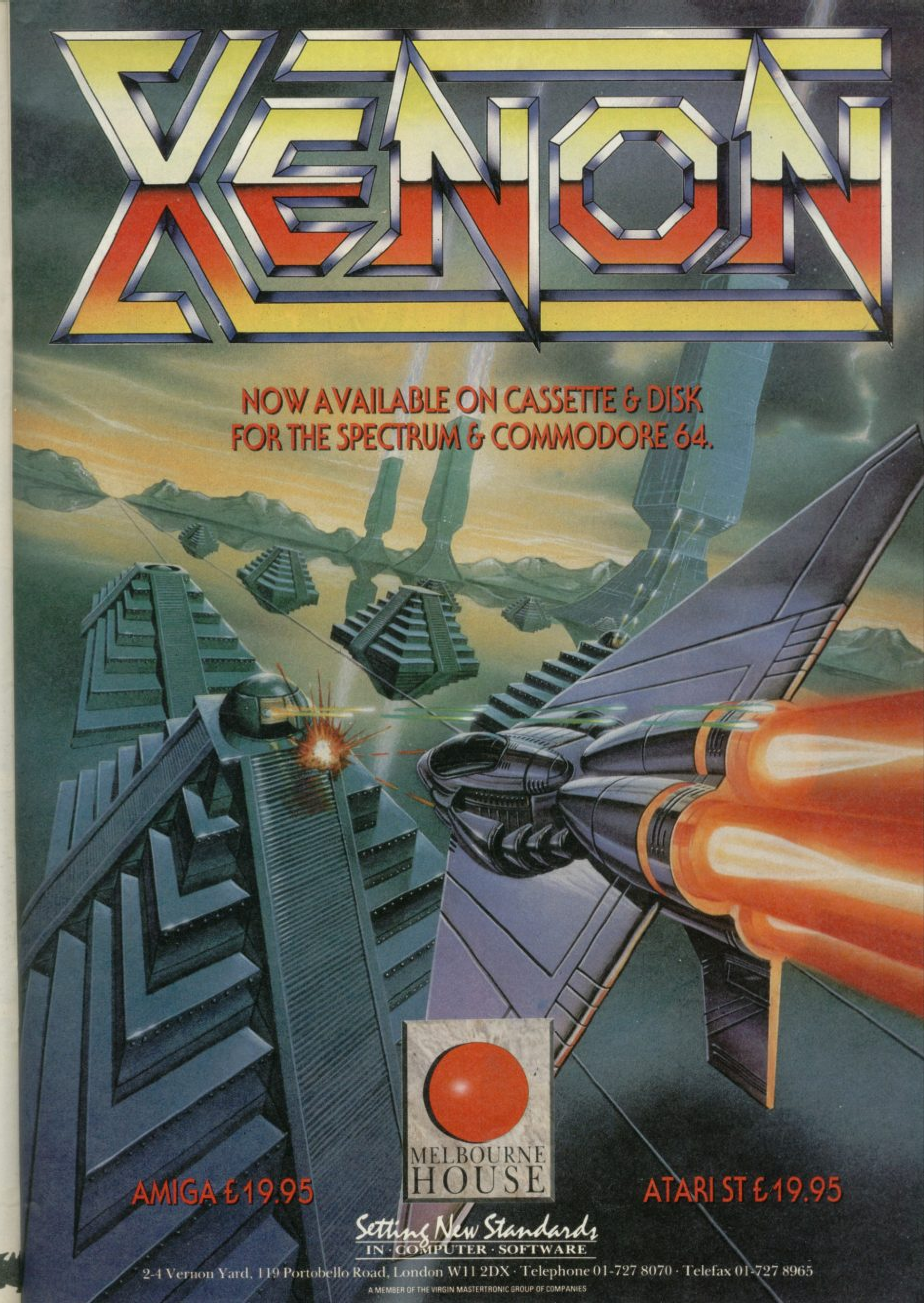
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HEROES OF THE

Pixie hats on – it's RPG time again. **Heroes of the Lance** has an impeccable pedigree; it's an official **Advanced Dungeons and Dragons** scenario based on the **Dragonlance** serie of characters and situations. If all this means nothing to you, then you probably won't think much of the game; if however you're a **Dragonlance** fan, you'll wee yourself with joy at the prospect of seeing your favourite characters in computer form.

The characters are the usual motley assortment of elves, humans, trolls and wizards. Each one is introduced with a portrait, biographical details, and, in the 25-page booklet, attribute points for characteristics such as strength, intelligence, dexterity and charisma.

This is the first problem with the game; although the characteristics obviously change as you play the game, you can't edit them or define your own characters. In that sense, it may be a role-playing game, but the roles are strictly





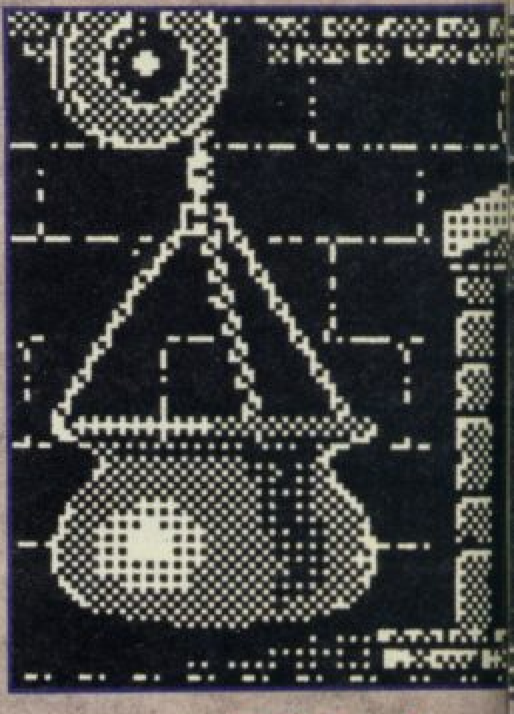



defined by the program.

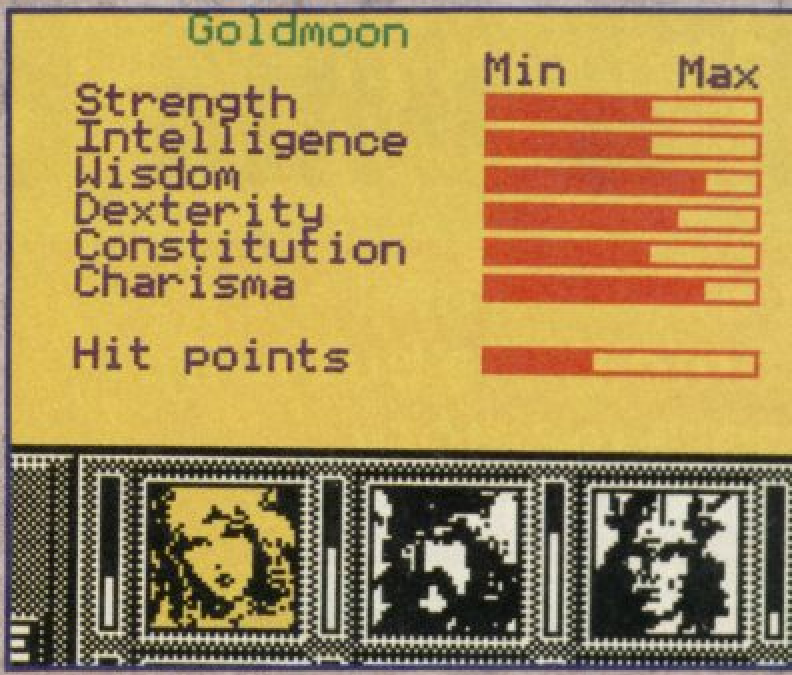
Once you have gone through the enormously long-winded multi-stage loading process, you are ready to begin the quest. There's a pseudo mediaeval music theme; otherwise sound effects are minimal. The playing screen shows the ruined city of Xak Tsaroth. Your party has to explore the ruins, recover the lost Disks of Tsaroth and do a little shopping.

The second big prob with the game is that while the graphics are quite ambitious and the characters well animated, the designs are dead boring – warrior, demon, dwarf, ho-hum – and the characters, backgrounds AND menus are all white-on-black. Monochrome is OK if you want to avoid colour clash, but all black-and-white, all the way through the game? Leave it out, Bjornthroth.

The eight characters of the party are shown beneath the main screen, each with his or her own strength meter. As you move through the city, using joystick or keyboard control to move left and right, and into or







out of exits, you will soon realise that you can't get by without making a map. The compass to the bottom left spins to show your current orientation, and flashes to indicate any possible directions of movement.

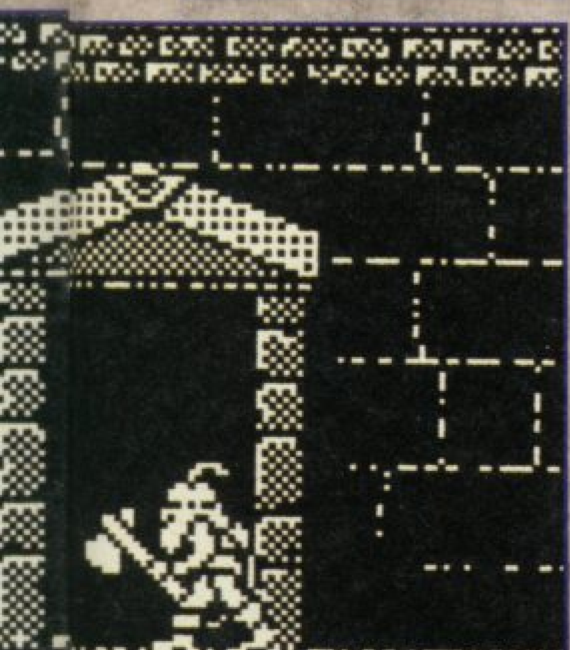
When you encounter any of the fearsome monsters (yawn), you can combat them according to what weapons you are carrying, or have found along the way. You can choose a high, centre or low thrust, or a dodge. If you carry a bow or spear you can stick the baddies from a distance. Unfortunately, there's no indication of how much damage you've done, which makes it a bit difficult to judge when to run away. Speaking of











fleeing, you can also run or jump over certain obstacles, though some crevasses seem to be impassable.

Two sub-menus allow you to select further functions such as TAKE, USE, GIVE and DROP; and to select spells for your magic users. These include spells to locate traps (such as blocks of stone which plummet from ceilings when you walk beneath them, curiously like Psygnosis' **Barbarian**); to defect dragon breath (there are lots of dragons in the lower levels) and to cure critical wounds.

If a character dies, the next one along automatically takes over, but you can select a different character if you wish. I think it's a problem though that in effect you are controlling only one character at a time, so you don't get much impression of controlling an entire party (and you certainly don't see them all simultaneously in animated form on the screen).

You can save and reload games, but basically every time you play you'll have the same goals, and all you can hope to do is to score a higher overall mark.

Compared to something like **The Bard's Tale, Heroes of the Lance** has limited play appeal. It's a disappointing cross between RPGs and arcade-adventures which doesn't make the best of either genre, though it will probably be enjoyed by anyone who is a true devotee of the original■

ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

HEROES OF THE LANCE *Label:* ***US GOLD/SSI*** *Author:* ***Teoman Irmak*** *Price:* ***£9.99/£14.99*** *Memory:* ***48K/128K*** *Joystick:* ***Various***

GRAPHICS	SOUND
58	55
PLAYABILITY	**LAST ABILITY**
58	78

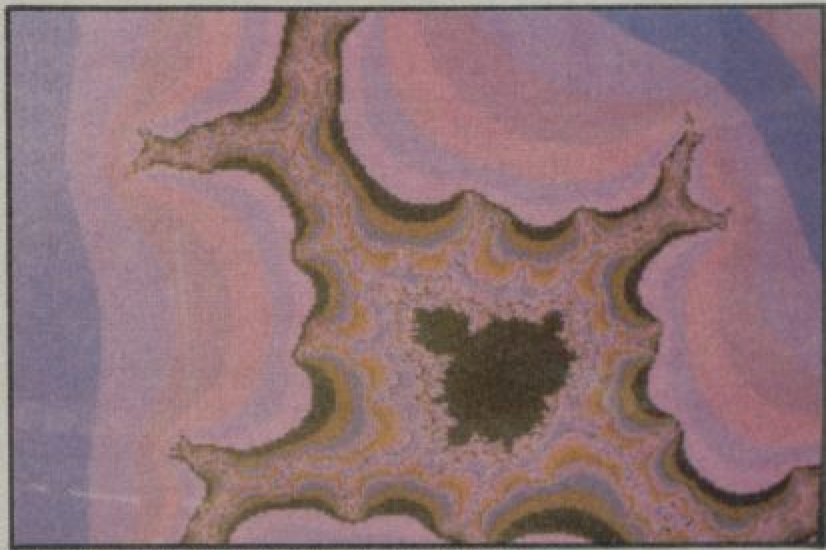
Unsuccessful cross between RPGs and arcade-adventure.

Reviewer:

OVERALL **70**

THE SAM COUPÉ A ME

It's Spectrum compatible but with more memory, potentially vastly superior software, zappier sound and a faster processor – and that's just the beginning ... Rupurt Goodwins wonders, is the SAM Coupé too good to be true?



Coupe screen in Mode 2 – 8 times Spectrum resolution.

SAM's on the horizon. **SAM** is MGT's range of computers, and the one that's being coyly shown off to the world bit by bit is the **SAM Coupe.** This machine is Spectrum compatible, hardware and software. But it's got more memory, superior software, zappier sonics, and packs more processor punch than any Spectrum that's yet seen the light of day. It's got some neat design features, too.



Coupe screen in Mode 3 – Hi resolution 512 x 192 pixel display in 4 colour – the 80 column mode.



Coupe screen in Mode 4 – The graphics mode with 256 x 192. 16 colours from a palette of 64 at any pixel.

Question: If you've been using a Spectrum for more than a year or so, are you happy with the way Amstrad have developed the computer? Or, if you're a serious user, what about the upgrades available? By doing nothing much to the Speccy apart from bolting on a disk drive, it might seem that Mr Sugar is forcing Spectroids who just want that little bit more into the arms of Atari and Commodore. One of the big things about owning a Spectrum used to be the fierce loyalty that came with the Sinclair logo.

Some people who haven't had that much trouble keeping going are the guys at Miles Gordon Technology. By producing a range of add-ons, and consistently supporting the Speccy through rubber and plastic, they've become, by default the keepers of much of the old Spectrum spirit. A measure of their success, and perhaps one showing Sugar what he'd been missing, is the Plus D disk drive interface. Despite – because of? – the Spectrum +3, the MGT addon is selling ever more strongly and has helped push the company up from four men in a broom closet at the beginning of the year to 15 people in Wales now. and now

Starting from the outside, with features that are yet to be finalised (real **SAMs** will appear in April, say MGT), the first difference is that this Coupe is white. It's got a full keyboard, with 71 alphanumeric editing and function keys. It's similar in height and angle to the +2 and +3. In the front edge are slots for two 3.5" disk drives – new technology products that are much smaller and use less power than but the same disks as existing drivers. People who buy the tape based machine will be able to slot in disks as they want, later.

On the side of the machine are two buttons: reset and NMI. This last one is much the same thing as snapshot buttons on things like the Plus D and the Multiface, but MGT are 'talking' to software houses about exactly what it should do. Whatever, it will make buying software on tape and transferring to disk for personal use much easier. There's a lot of the Plus elsewhere in the machine...

At the back is a row of sockets, which between them do the lot. There's a full **Midi** implementation, with proper hardware to cope with receive; unlike the 128, +2 and +3, the **SAM Coupe** will be able to work properly with sythesisers and drum machines. The same sockets also share a network which will let **SAMs** chatter to each other, fast. MGT talk hopefully of software houses writing games where two **SAM** users pit themselves and their machines against each other – other computers with networks have yet to see such ideas take off, but they cost more than **SAM** will.

Other coneections include one for joystick – this uses the real standard for wiring but the Interface 3/number key mapping, not Kempston. Not so much of a problem as it might seem, be-

EGASPECTRUM AT LAST

cause another socket includes the full Z80 bus. It's not an edge of the circuit board; instead it's a QL-style Euroconnector. Euroconnectors are far more reliable, nevertheless MGT have a twister than takes the SAM bus and turns it into a Spectrum-style set of fingers into which can be plugged Kempston interfaces, VTX modems, even (with a swift chip change) the old Plus D disk interface. It seems more compatible with the +2 than the +2A is . . .

Planned (but not yet available for inspection) is the Card Cage. This is a buffered bus extender, that can take many more **SAM** expansion cards. MGT have regular contact with that (once thought extinct) creature, the electronic hobbyist and also the rapidly evolving beast, the educational user. The Card Cage should make the **SAM** a good choice for small-scale computing and control experiments . . . as someone once said, "run a power station". There's a printer slot. This is neither parallel nor serial, instead MGT's will be a 'smart cable' with either a Centronics or RS232 lump in it. The big plan behind this is to keep the cost of the base model down without making it too expensive for those with printers. Mouse and lightpen sockets are in as standard too, although the standards they follow are MGT's own. Inside the computer, there's a lot of memory: 256K of **Ram** –on just two chips – and 64K of **Rom.** The **Ram** can be upgraded by plugging in two more chips to 512K, and the BASIC – based on **BetaBasic** and likewise written by Andy Wright will address all the memory directly. It will be possible, claim MGT, to have a BASIC program that fills the memory without the programmer having to worry about overlays or **Ram**-disks. And even more startling the **SAM** will be able to hold up to four programs in memory and switch between them at the touch of a key. This will include existing Spectrum progams so perhaps we'll see **Operation Wolf** running side-by-side with **Tasword 2.**

Still more memory – with no particular limit – can be plugged into the back of the computer via the extension socket. Due to some smart design, such memory will not only be treated by the computer as if it was internal (removing the need for complicated switching schemes), it will also run a good 50% faster than the real internal silicon. There is, similarly, no sensible limit to the number of **Roms** that can be plugged into the computer through the standard expansion.

Whatever, the new BASIC will be able to cope with the new screen modes. As well as a Spectrum-compatible is-that-a-colour-clash-or-has-the-alien-been-sick mode, there's a 512 x 192 pixel option that can give 80 characters or more across the screen. That's in four colours; the other modes give two colours per line of eight pixels or a free choice of colour for each pixel in standard Spectrum 256 x 192 resolution.

It's much better than that, actually, since **SAM** has a 64-colour palette. Each of the 16 normal Spectrum colours (eight standard, eight bright) can be assigned one of the 64 palette shades in any mode, even the Spectrum-compatible one. And **SAM** can switch palettes at the end of any display line and there are 192 of these, so the full 64 colours can be displayed onscreen with the minimum of software magic. It's even possible to switch screen mode on to line, paving the way for adventures with a really good text area along the bottom and hot graphics at the top.

All of the **SAM** circuitry that matters lives in one chip. Custom chips used to be called ULAs, for Uncommitted Logic Arrays, but this Year's buzzword is ASIC. Unfortunately, it's pronounced a-sick, standing for Application Specific Integrated Circuit. Never say **SU** ain't educational. The **SAM Coupe** BASIC contains some 3000 logic gates – that's the equivalent of over 130 of the old style black caterpillar chips found in older, less desirable computers. In all the video stuff, most of the input/output circuitry and large chunks of Plus-D design.

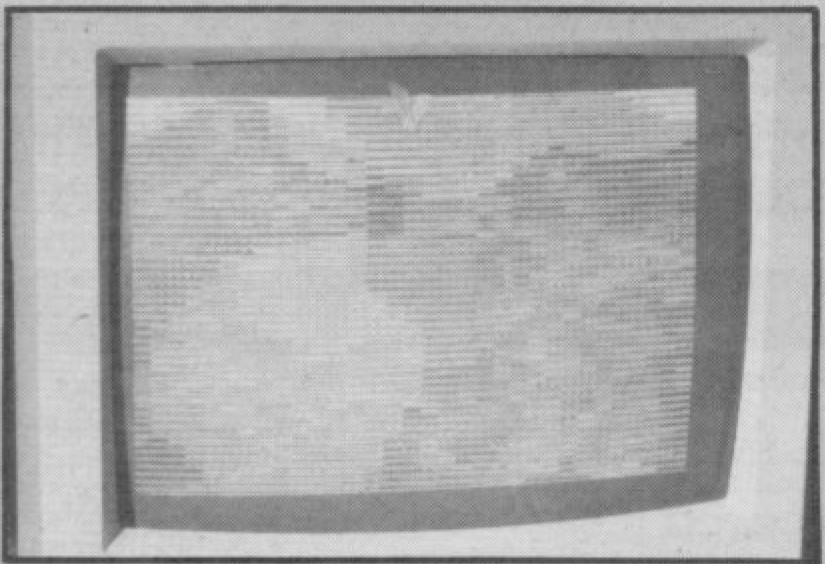
So what? Well, the Plus-D has been out in the big wide nasty world for a while now, and the circuitry has been debugged and proved. So, for a change, the new circuits in the **Coupe** have been properly tested before they hit the street. And (of course) the **SAM Coupe** will be compatible with the format of the Plus D, which has already attracted no little software effort. Andy Wright has said that there's no real problem in writing a Spectrum to **SAM** Basic converter, and MGT feel such a thing important, so the disk organisers, menuing and doctroing programs that already exist should feel right at home. Also in the ASIC is the circuitry to squeeze megabytes of **Ram** into the Z80's meagre 64K capability. Like the +3, it can arrange things so that operating systems like CP/M will work; it can also make a chunk of **Ram** appear like **Rom.** This opens the way for owners of Speccies to *Save* their **Rom** to tape, *Load* it into **SAM** and turn the thing into a true Spectrum clone without MGT incurring the wrath of the boys from Brentwood.

And talking of Spectrum compatibility . . . Based on tests they've done, MGT expect a software compatibility figure of about 80% on pure machine-code games. Of course, without a proper Speccy **Rom** things that try and use it to *Print* to the screen won't work, unless people do the trick with the tapes mentioned above. Hardware compatibility should be as good, if not better. And when it comes to speed, **SAM** will have the edge. It' got a Z80B running at 6MHz, instead of the original Z80A tromping along at 3 and a bit. However, the **Ram** shares time with the video circuitry, so the effective speed of the computer will only be about ten percent above the old Spectrum. BASIC will be lots faster though, as it runs from **Rom** when the processor can go at the full 6MHz.

Sound is quite a bit different. As well as the old Speccy *Beep* circuit, the **SAM Coupe** uses a Philips chip to provide six voices in stereo. This comes off the TV speaker (though not in surroundi-sound) or through the back of the computer to headphones or an amplifier. Like this, the fact that the chip can pan sound from left to right and back again will no doubt be made brain-scramblingly obvious.



G) No – the oscilloscope is not **the Coupe screen display.**



B) Coupe screen emulation Mode 1. In front of the Coupe – many of the chips will disappear with the production of customised components.

Harking back to the good old Spectrum days, there will be two manuals. The first will be a slim tome, for beginners and games merchants only. The second heftier tome will be a full BASIC reference, together with in-depth technical hardware and software information. The world is full of people who taught themselves computing from the back of an old-style Sinclair manual, many of whom went on to write some classic games.

MGT are at pains to sell the **SAM Coupe** as not a Spectrum clone. No Spectrum can run four games at once, so it looks like they're right; likewise the extra screen modes, modern disk system and sensible design make them seem like the good guys. They talk to users (many of whom have been involved in specifying parts of **SAM),** they go to Microfairs. And perhaps more than anything, they've got the old Sinclair fire burning. How much of this is all going to turn out to be that other Sinclair innovation, advanced salesmanship, is not clear, but the chances look excellent for the **SAM Coupe** to make it onto the road. And soon. Keep the faith!

Rupert Goodwins

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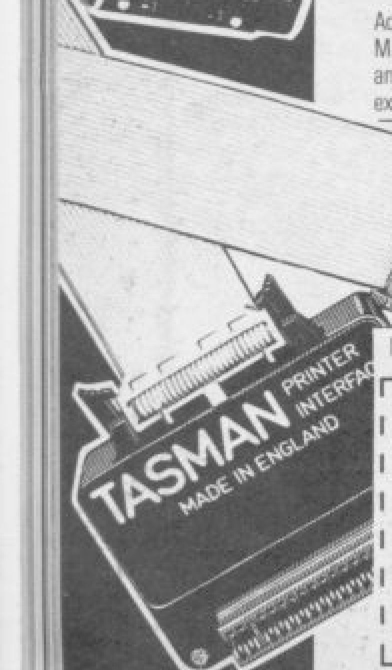
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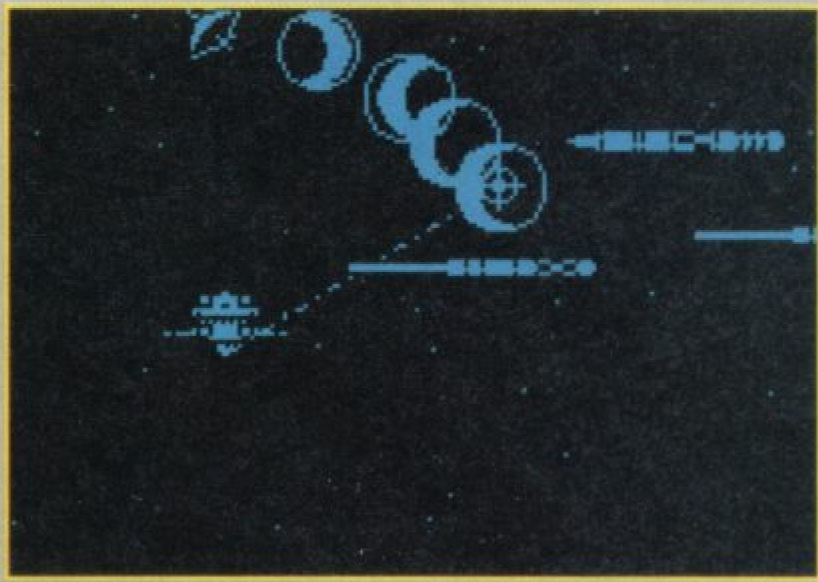
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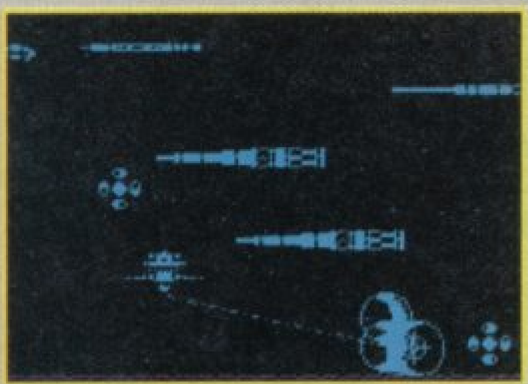


SDI

If you're half as confused as I am, then I'm twice as confused as you. You might have seen ads for a game called **SDI**, published by Mirrorsoft, one of the Cinemaware range. But this ISN'T IT! This is a completely and utterly different game, converted from a Sega coin-op.

What does **SDI** stand for? If you read the papers you'll know that it stands for Strategic Defence Initiative. So what the pooh does that mean? It's the American plan to put laser- armed satellites in orbit to shoot down incoming nuclear missiles.

At first sight, you might think that **SDI** is simply an updated version of the





classic **Missile Command.** At second sight, you might think the same thing. You control a spinning laser-armed satellite which moves freely through the majesty of the cosmos. When you press the fire button, a blistering beam of laser energy (in other words a dotted line) shoots out from your laser spondules. Joystick control then switches to the laser target cursor, and your satellite stands still in space as the laser roves in search of targets.

The targets approach you from all directions; enemy missiles, space fighters, satellites and interceptors in the first stages, and later on whirling saucers, clouds of ionised gas and pods. There are some tremendous explosions as you hit targets, and decent sound effects as they disintegrate. A damage bar at the bottom of the screen shows how close you are to destruction.

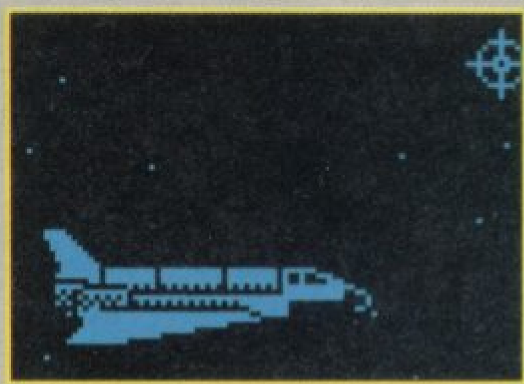
After the initial offensive phase, you rendesvouz with a passing space shuttle and move on to the defensive phase. Here, you hover over your city, trying to shoot down any enemy missiles and landers which have got past you in the in the offensive phase.

Between phases there's a status report which shows the percentage of targets you've knocked out. If you've achieved a perfect round, you get a points bonus and a DANCING PENGUIN!!! (Well, that's what it looks like.)

To make things more interesting, some of the satellites eject pods which, when shot and picked up, give you increased speed, multiple cursors and bigger explosions; all of which you'll definitely need on the later levels, when masses of enemies surround you and vie for the honour of smashing you to bits.

As a bonus you have a choice of several control methods; one player with a moving cursor, one player with a fixed cursor (so that moving the satellite changes your aim), or two players, one controlling the satellite and the other guiding the cursor.

Apart from the hideous music and monotonous blue-on-blue- on black colour scheme, **SDI** is a little gem. It may not



feature state-of-the-art 3D animated graphics, icon controls or all the other dooflippery, but it's a mega blast and you can't ask better than that, can you punters?■

FAX BOX

ARCADE REVIEW

SDI Label: **Activision** Author: **Source Software** Price: **£8.95** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **Various**

Surprisingly exciting coin-op conversion; plays even better than it looks

Reviewer: Tony Dillon

GRAPHICS	SOUND
68	56
92	93
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

OVERALL **90**

FULL PRICE 20

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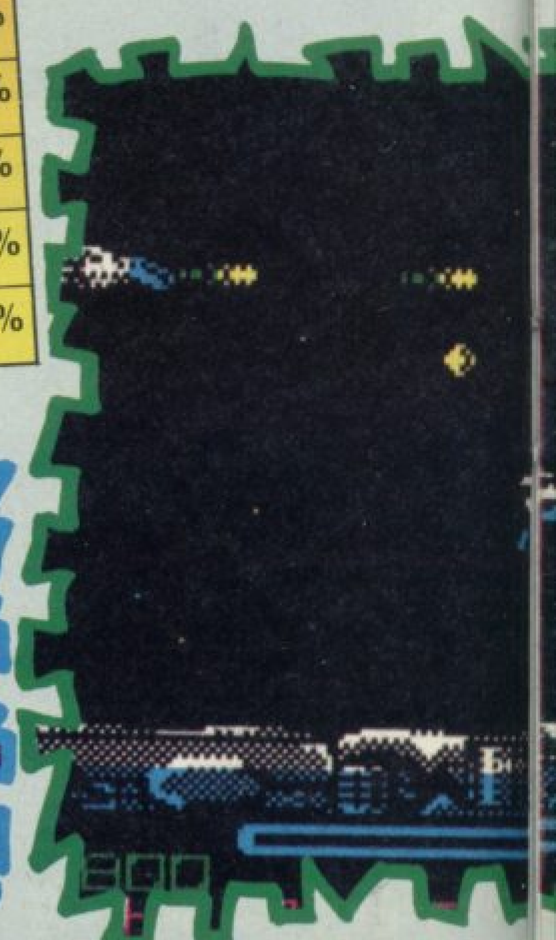
1	NEW!	**DOUBLE DRAGON** CLASSIC Disappointing two-player karate coin-op conv	MELBOURNE HOUSE	£9.99	51%
2	NEW!	**OPERATION WOLF** CLASSIC Addictive – one for everyone's Christmas list	OCEAN	£8.99	90%
3	(1)	**LAST NINJA 2** CLASSIC Wonderful, unmissable martial arts graphic adventure	SYSTEM 3	£12.99	92%
4	(3)	**FOOTBALL MANAGER 2** An improvement on the legendary game, plays brilliantly	ADDICTIVE	£9.99	94%
5	(2)	**DALEY THOMPSON'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE** Graphically impressive but slightly samey sports sim	OCEAN	£9.99	85%
6	NEW!	**AFTERBURNER** Top-class conv destined to top the charts	ACTIVISION	£9.99	90%
7	(5)	**SUPREME CHALLENGE** Excellent compilation of excellent games	BEAU JOLLY	£12.95	84%
8	NEW	**R-TYPE** CLASSIC Possibly the best space shoot-'em-up conv ever	ELECTRIC DREAMS	£9.99	90%
9	RE	**OUT RUN** Great race game coin-op conv	SEGA-US GOLD	£8.99	90%
10	NEW!	**AIRBORNE RANGER** Interesting but not staggering military sim	MICROPROSE	£9.95	72%
11	(17)	**TAITO COIN-OPS** Good value package of good and bad convs	OCEAN	£12.95	73%
12	(4)	**TRACK SUIT MANAGER** The managerial game your Speccy has been waiting for	GOLIATH	£9.95	63%
13	NEW!	**RETURN OF THE JEDI** Faithful but uninspiring coin-op conv	DOMARK	£9.95	60%
14	(8)	**ROADBLASTERS** Nice-looking coin-op conversion with both racing and shooting	US GOLD	£8.99	81%
15	NEW!	**GAME SET AND MATCH 2** Good collection of sporty games	OCEAN	£12.95	84%
16	(6)	**TYPHOON** Jet fighter arcade game. Good bit of blasting but try before you buy	OCEAN	£7.95	72%
17	(10)	**PETER BEARDSLEY'S FOOTBALL** A croaking old duffer – avoid	GRANDSLAM	£8.95	34%
18	NEW!	**FISTS 'N' THROTTLES** Violence abounds, five times!	ELITE	£12.99	74%
19	(7)	**GOLD SILVER AND BRONZE** Fab sports sim compilation. Many faves. Pricey	US GOLD	£14.99	70%
20	(19)	**NIGEL MANSELL'S GRAND PRIX** Graphically superb but not especially exciting	MARTECH	£9.99	70%

1	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2
2	DALEY'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE
3	TRACK SUIT MANAGER
4	GAME SET AND MATCH 2
5	PETER BEARDSLEY'S FOOTBALL

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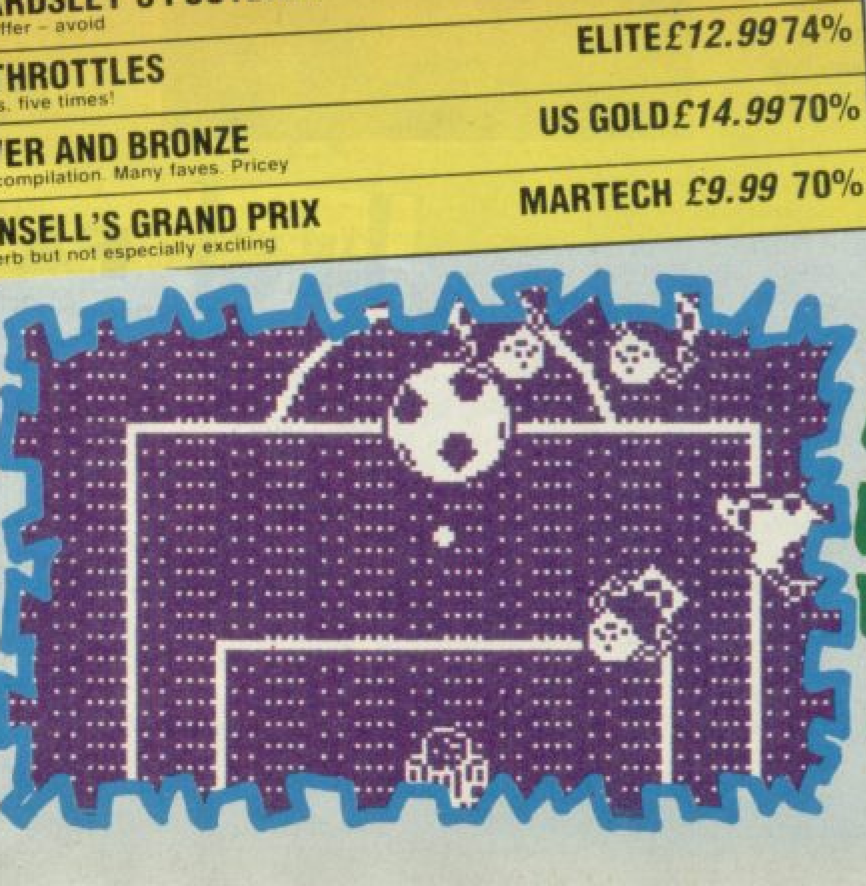
CHART COMMENT – BUDGET

Budget's staying all pretty humdrum and predictable this month, with Gauntlet falling surprisingly quickly after a brief stay at the top.



HOT BUDGET

Code Masters probably makes the most impressive stand this month with no less than three games in the top five! Whew! Of that two of them are new entries!! Double Whew!! Players still manages to hold the top slot with Joe Blade 2, but watch out below, Advanced Pinball Simulator looks like it could be set to take the coveted position. Stay tuned.



SU CHARTS

	ADDICTIVE	SIMULATION
...ENGE	OCEAN	
	GOLIATH	
	OCEAN	
...TBALL	GRAND SLAM	
	MELBOURNE HOUSE	ARCADE
	OCEAN	
	SYSTEM 3	
	ACTIVISION	
	BEAU JOLLY	



CHART COMMENT – FULL PRICE

Deary me, it just goes to show that you take no notice of reviews at all doesn't it. The disastrous Double Dragon in at the top, beating, of all things, Operation Wolf, Afterburner and R-Type! Elsewhere, not much happening, though Out Run surprises everyone by making a re-entry. You just can't keep a bad game down.

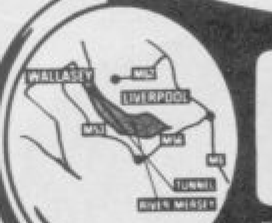
HOT FULL PRICE

It's pretty obvious which four titles are going to be at the top next month, but where's Thunderblade? Expect a top ten entry next time around, expect Double Dragon to fall, but who can say which of the four biggies will take its place. We wait expectantly.

BUDGET 10



1	(1)	**JOE BLADE 2** Still holding strong at the top	PLAYERS £2.99 55%
2	(2)	**BOMB JACK** Action packed coin-op conv – good value	ENCORE £1.99 70%
3	(9)	**ADVANCED PINBALL SIMULATOR** Below average pinball game	CODE MASTERS £1.99 42%
4	NEW!	**PRO SKATEBOARD SIMULATOR** 720 goes budget	CODE MASTERS £1.99 78%
5	NEW!	**INTERNATIONAL RUGBY SIMULATOR** Haven't we seen this before? Uninspiring	CODE MASTERS £1.99 28%
6	(10)	**COMMANDO** Influential vertical scrolling shoot-'em-up	ENCORE £2.99 70%
7	(5)	**EUROPEAN FIVE A SIDE** Original, entertaining overhead football game	FIREBIRD £1.99 70%
8	NEW!	**FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR** Unusual angle on a football theme	KIXX £2.99 81%
9	(3)	**GAUNTLET** Fantastic coin-op – fantastic conversion	KIXX £2.99 85%
10	RE	**GHOSTBUSTERS** Big hit – now looks it's age	MASTERTRONIC £1.99 60%



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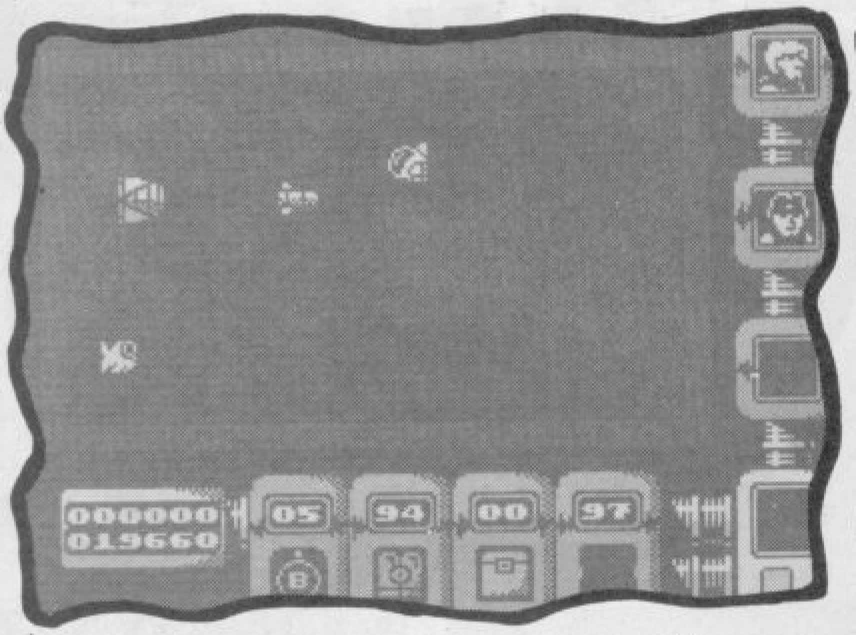
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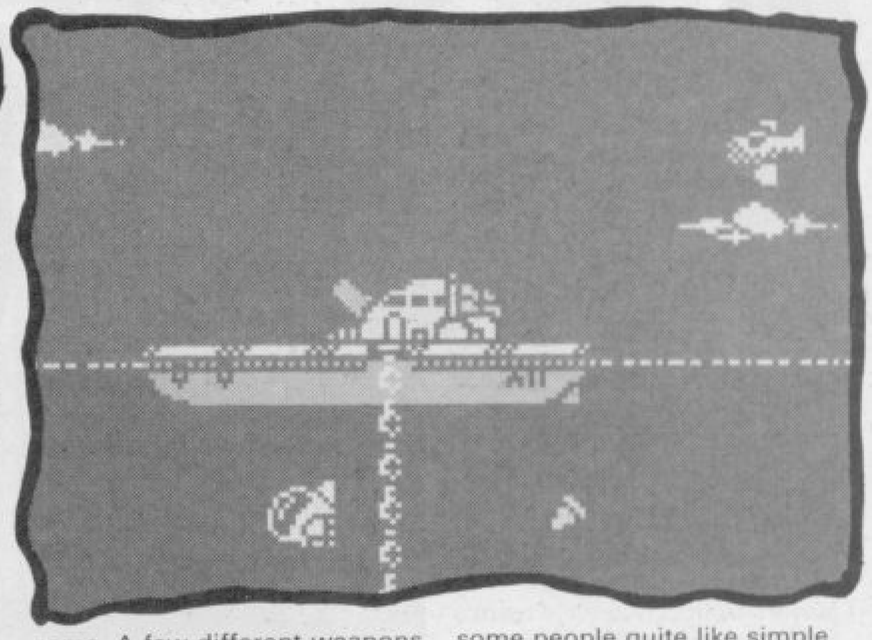
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AQUASQUAD

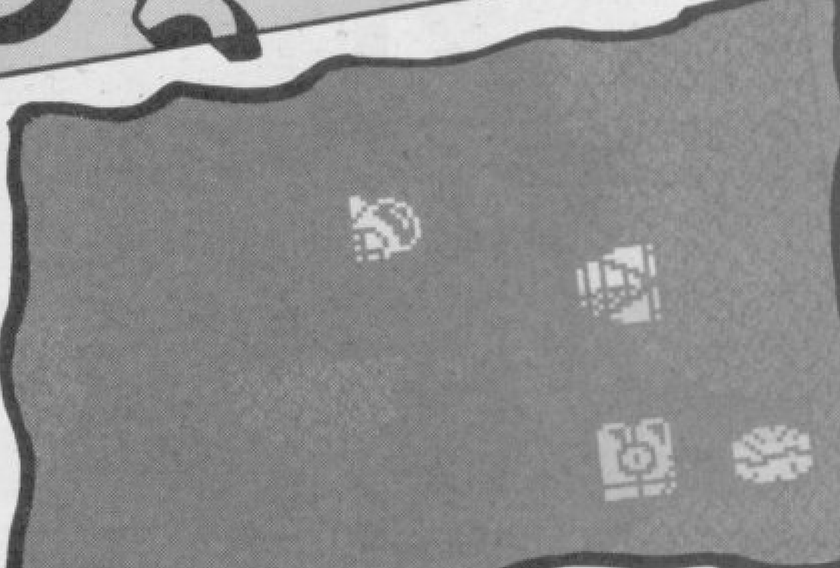
Mariiinaaa, Aqua Mariiiinaaa! Yes folks, it's return of the Stingray-esque game and this is the most Stingray-ish game I've ever played. This Stingray feel is produced because: i) It's under water. ii) The animation is dreadful. iii) It somehow manages to look quite good. iv) It gets tedious after you've seen it once.

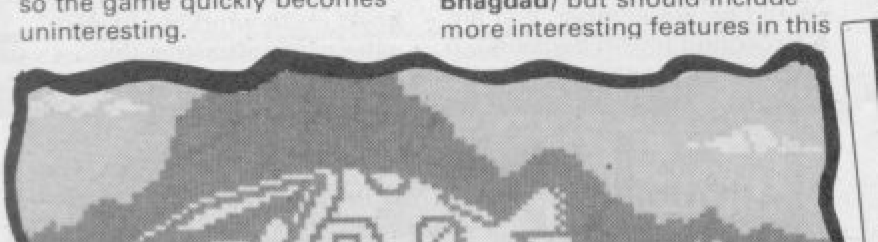
Your mission is to find four somethings before storming the installation where the evil what'stheirnames are leading their domination of the world's air and shipping lanes. Nothing original there eh? So, you set off in your NATO designed Aquaslashkickmain kill-a-tron, and what do your find? Well, no Aquaphibians for a start, which shattered my illusions about Stingray, but to make it worse, the graphics are badly handled so the game quickly becomes uninteresting.

The sprites for all the enemies are very slow to get anywhere near you, but considering that you also move at around 1 mile ever zillion yars, and your torpedoes also move at roughly half the speed of Sylvester Stallone's brain (we are talking SLOW here) there is not much in the way of eyeball dangling action. The sound coming over the hydrophones – no! speakers (sorry it's just another attack of the Stingrays) is wimpish beyond belief. Beeps and farts don't come into it here, we are talking clicks, and nothing else. You have to move your ship very, very precisely or you'll just end up dead on the first few screens every time, just like me.

Atlantis have a knack of producing good looking games (remember **The Sceptre of Bhagdad**) but should include more interesting features in this game. A few different weapons wouldn't go amiss.

Below average even for a budget game, I personally wouldn't recommend it, but some people quite like simple games (even if they are mind bogglingly boring)■





ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

AQUASQUAD *Label:* ***Atlantis*** *Author:* ***In house*** *Price:* ***£1.99*** *Memory:* ***48K/128K***
Joystick: ***Various***

Poor underwater blast, don't be fooled by the nice graphics

Reviewer: Tony Dillon

GRAPHICS	SOUND
73	55
30	35
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

OVERALL **40**

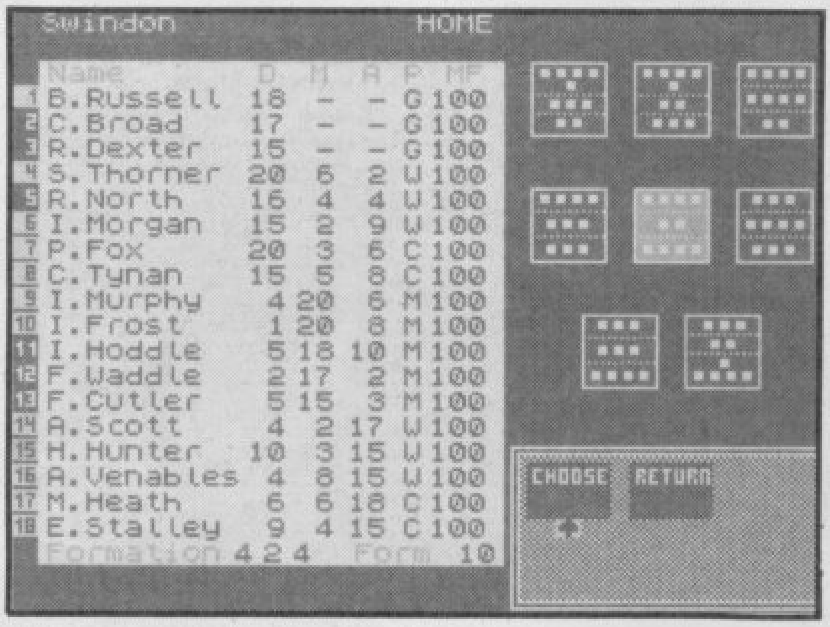
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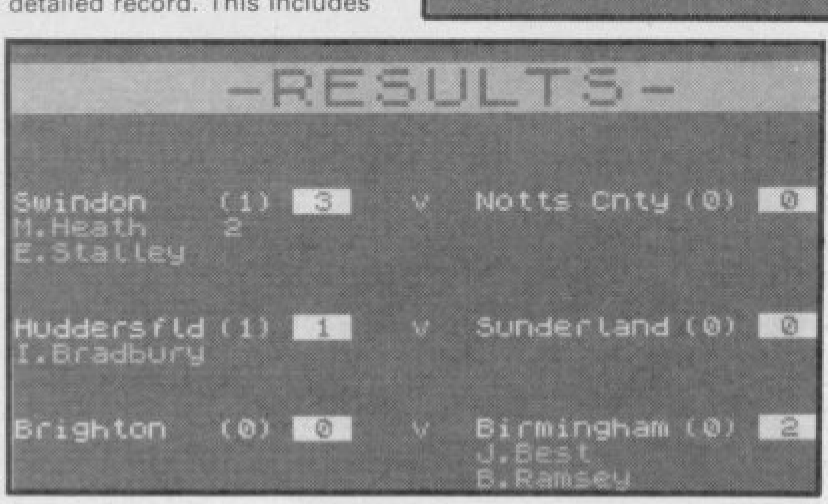
PRO SOCCER

In its basic elements, **Professional Soccer** is the same as every other football managerial game on the market. Start in the bottom division with the aim to both get promoted and win the FA cup each season, buy and sell players to improve your team's statistics and basically enjoy getting beaten six nil by Aston Villa in the FA Cup semi finals.

The game employs a fairly original control system. The whole game is run via a small box in the bottom right hand corner which contains up to six small boxes, each one representing an available option. These range from the obvious such as load, save, buy/sell, tables/scores to the not so obvious player info and the downright mysterious team centre.

Each of the players in the game, and there are quite a lot of them, has some kind of detailed record. This includes





age, health and best position, as well as any outstanding points, such as good penalty taker. At the bottom is a set price which you pay to buy the player should he be up for grabs.

The team centre is where all the interesting things take place. Two options are available to you in the team centre. One is formations. This is where you get to choose which of the eight possible formations you'd like the team to play in, ranging from the regulars such as 3-4-4 and 4-3-4, to 5-2-4.

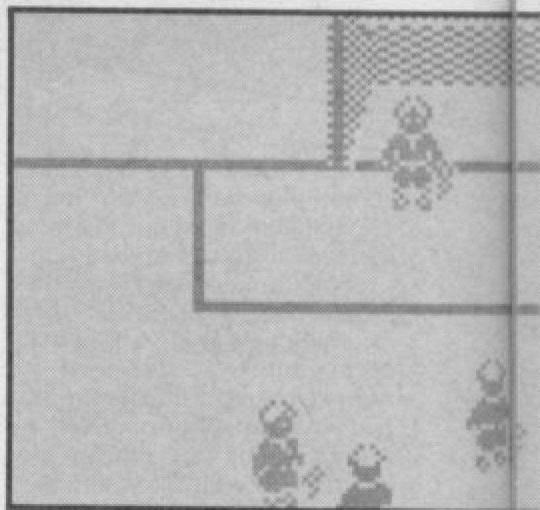
The other option, you remember I mentioned two, is the selection option. The screen display changes into three windows. The left hand window, which takes up half of the screen, shows your players and all their statistics. The top right hand window shows a graphical representation of the formation, showing all the empty slots. Use left and right to move the flashing cursor to an empty spot, press fire and a bar will appear highlighitn one of your players. Move this up and down to select the player you want in that particular position, and press fire to put him there. It's that easy.

The players are quite well detailed, each having four important statistics. These are defensive, midfield and attacking scores out of 25 and a fitness rating as a percentage. The player's position is listed as well, as either G for goalie, W for winger, C for centre and M for midfielder. When selecting your team you have to try for the highest possible score for the position the man plays. A defender with a high attack score is a bonus, not a must.

So, you've done all your good deeds and you're up against the opposition in a blood-thirsty battle between 22 savages all fighitng for glory, or as we know it soccer. For most of the match, the screen shows all the players on screen for each team along with the score and the time. Unlike previous games, the time runs in three minute steps, 30 in all. Just like **Football Manager,** the game shows highlights of the match as they happen. These are quite entertaining to see, though they can become boring. Thankfully, they can be turned off. Graphically, they ain't bad however. They're far more realistic than **FM2,** though still have a long way to go before they come close to, say, **Matchday 2.**

It's hard to get started, granted, but that's how it should be. Remember, you are a struggling fourth division team. The only way you can get better is by buying better players and to buy better players, you have to get money and the only way you can get any money is to sell poor players.





Visually, **PS** is pretty cool. Various sizes of lettering and good clean windows make it even more attractive than **Tracksuit Manager's** layout■

ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL *Label:* ***CRL*** *Price:* ***£8.95*** *Author:* ***Kevin Brice, David Leitch*** *Memory:* ***48K/128K*** *Joystick:* ***Various***

Simple but fun footy with some really nice graphics. CRL are finally back on the ball

Reviewer: Tony Dillon

GRAPHICS	SOUND
80	74
84	82
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

OVERALL 82

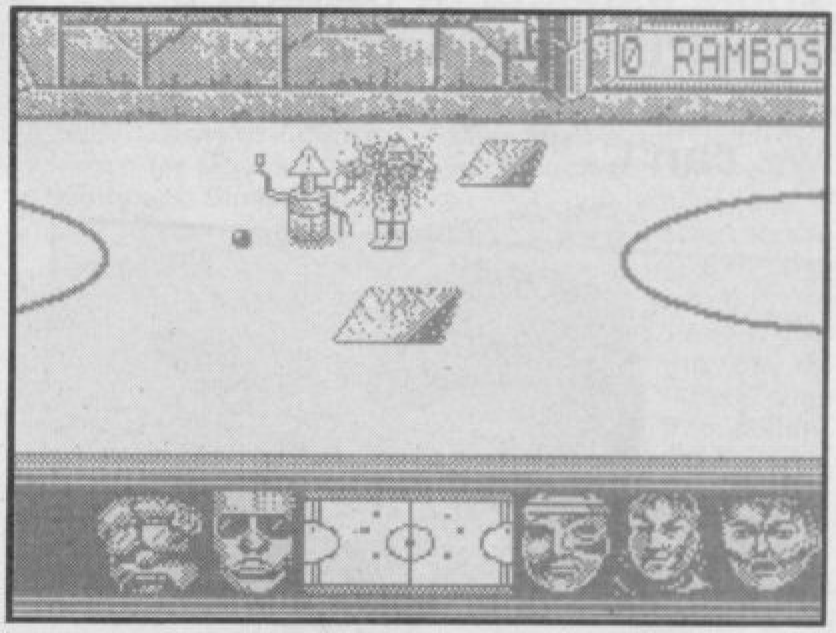
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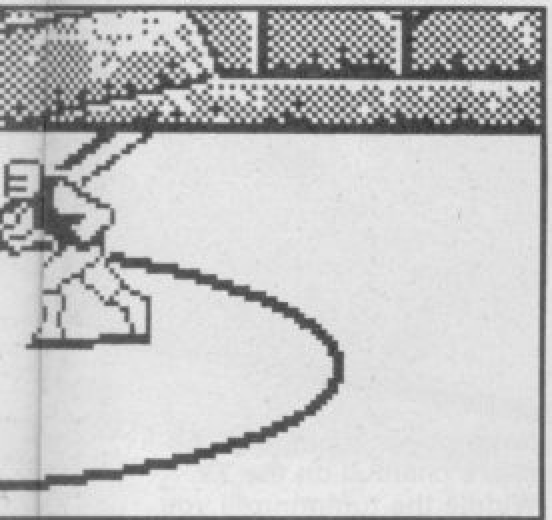
SKATEBALL

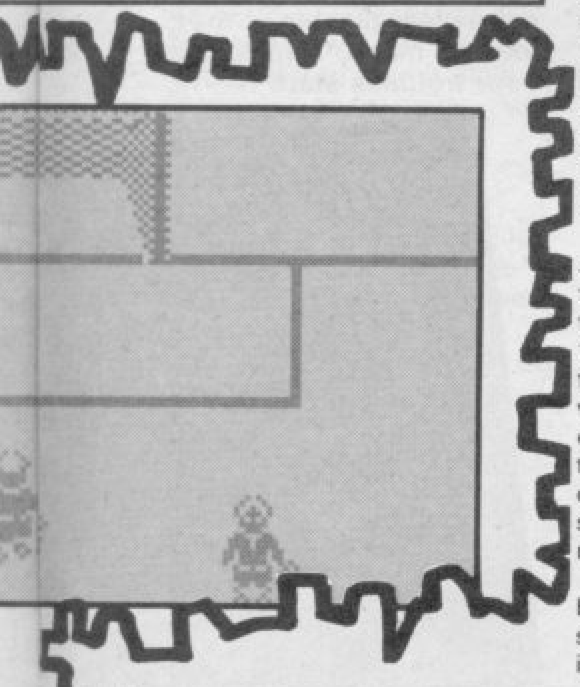
J. D. came over to me today, and spake thus: 'Ubi Soft'. So, thinking that he was talking in some weird Devonshire accent, I hurled a desk at him to prove that, really, I'm that 'ard. This was when it struck me that what he probably meant was Ubi Soft. So I untangled the package from the remaining mess of limbs, and found **Skateball**.

Skateball is a **Rollerball**-esque sport sim and is Ubi Soft's debut in the Spectrum software world. The rules are simple: Score goals, slash, skate, maim, skate, kill, score more goals . . .

You have three team members, only one of which can play at any time, and the idea is simply to score goals. You also have a goal keeper (computer controlled) which seems to have been programmed to let the players get the ball into the net with the minimum of hassle and obstruction. The bad goalkeepers are one of only two real faults with the game. The other point worthy of making a note of is that your player seems to spend most of the time "On 'is bum" as you have only to touch the other player and your feet lose control.







Apart from these two bad points, **Skateball** is fair. The graphics are big and can be quickly manipulated on some fairly hairy pitches. There are eight pitches, the first being just a normal footer pitch shape, the next has a mushroomy obstacle thingy in the middle. From then on, all manner of evil appears, such as pillars which rise up out of the ice, not to mention the pits which all but the most skillful players fall into.

When playing **Skateball** against the computer, you have to score five goals to go on to the next pitch (anyone asking 'what next pitch?' will be shot for not paying attention earlier when I explained that bit). After one of the two teams have been totally obliterated, the computer shows an aggregate score for all the pitches that you managed to survive.

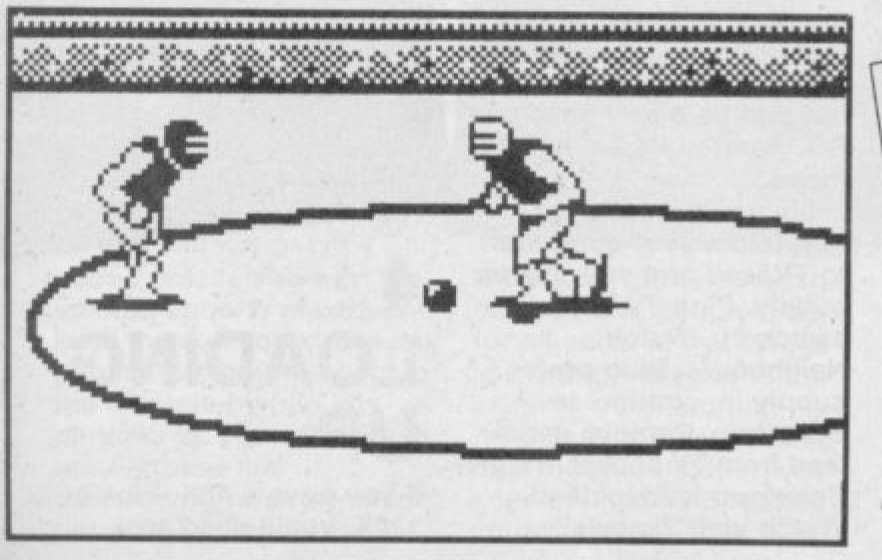
The sound in **Skateball** is basically basic in a very basic sort of way. I think they could've improved the game by having that music from **Rollerball** incorporated in the program, to add atmosphere. I'm sure you'd agree if you knew what the hell the music I'm talking about is. *(Bach's Toccata and Fugue, Mr Philistine – CJ).*

There are a few good features of the pre-game preparation, including choosing both your own, and the computer's team members (or if it's two humes, you take turns in picking a player) which means that you can take the best and leave the computer with the worst ones, right? Wrong. Each of the players has four different properties (strength, shoot-skill, balance, reactions); you have to experiment to determine which players to constantly pick and which not to.

There have not been that many skate/mutilate games on any computer, so this looks fairly good. I'm sure that soon, someone will produce an excellent one (a desperate plea for a Spectrum version of **Speedball**!)

Skateball, while being quite good in a psychotic way, is not what could be called a brilliant game, because of the two aforementioned faults, which caused me to kill three members of the SU staff by shocking them to death with the use of profane language (and believe me is was PROFANE language). To put it in short **Skateball** is a good game but caused some aggro and confusion, especially if playing against the computer.

Ubi Soft have made a fair entry into the Speccy world and providing they keep up the speedy, pretty games, maybe adding more gameplay (and, of course, some music wouldn't go amiss!) they could do well■





ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

SKATEBALL *Label:* **Ubi Soft** *Author:* **In house** *Price:* **£9.99/£14.99** *Memory:* **48K/128K** *Joystick:* **Various**

Almost excellent, spoilt by a couple of faults. Nice try.

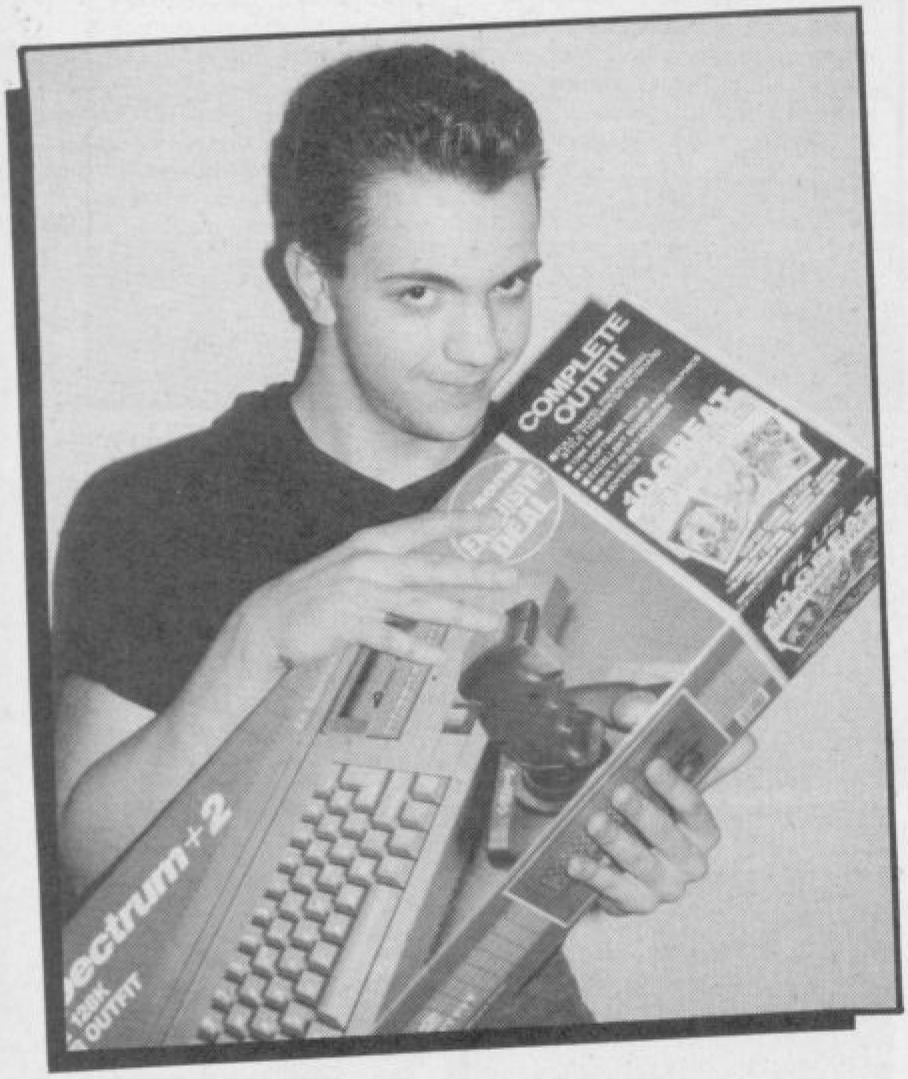
GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY	OVERALL
70	40	65	70	70

Reviewer:

BEGINNER'S GUIDE

So you've just got your first Spectrum for Christmas. Perhaps you're a little confused about some aspects of owning a Spectrum. Maybe we can help you out. And then again, maybe we can't.





1 . . . THE PROUD OWNER

What is a Proud Owner? All computer magazines get letters from thousands of Proud Owners. It doesn't matter what they own – a Spectrum, an Amiga, a Houston Mission Control Megacomputer – they're all proud of it. Presumably someone somewhere is proud of the Nascom Superspas 20 they assembled in 1964. Strangely enough, there seems to be no such thing as an "ashamed owner" or "disappointed owner", probably because no-one wants to admit they've bought a dodo.

So, you are automatically a "proud owner" the second you open the box.

2 . . . OPENING THE BOX

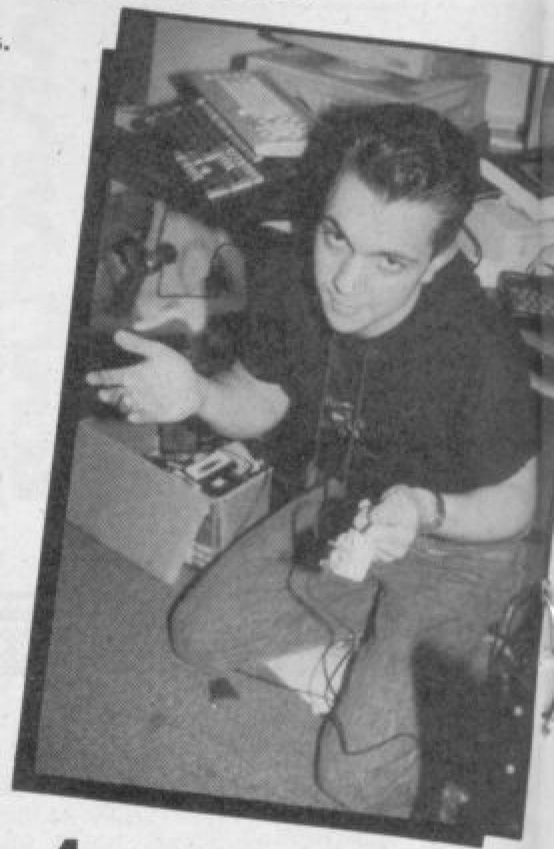
This is the tough bit. Boxes come in different types. If you've bought from a chainstore such as Di***'s, you may find all sorts of bizarre extras falling out when you open the box (such as joysticks). Sweep these to one side for a moment. You'll need them later.

If you've bought your computer from dodgy Jim's No Questions Asked Electrical Market Stall, it will probably come in a plastic bag with no serial numbers. Wipe your fingerprints off second-hand computers before and after use.

3 . . . GETTING IT GOING

You wouldn't believe how silly some new owners can be. Legend has it that someone phoned up Sinclair (RIP) complaining that he'd followed all the instructions and nothing was happening. It turned out that he didn't have the Spectrum plugged into the mains.

So, you'll need a television, your computer-to-TV lead and your power supply. Plug TV in and switch on. Watch Neighbours. Plug power supply in, connect to Spectrum. Remove aerial lead from TV socket. Plug in Spectrum lead instead. Watch very "snowy" Neighbours again. Choose spare channel on the TV. Widdle the tuning until you get a clear display of the loading menu. This is when your troubles start.



4 . . . LOADING UP

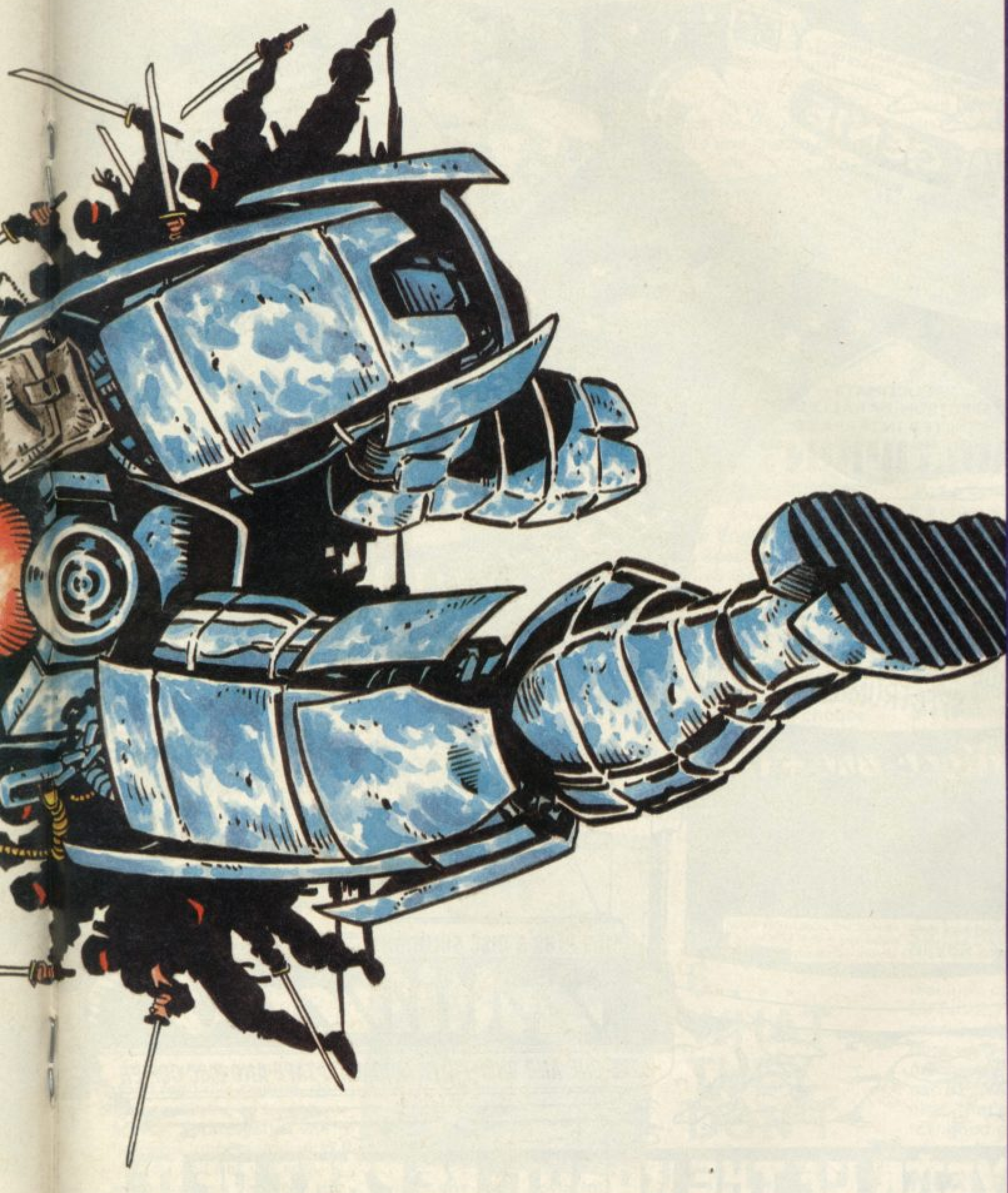
If you have a 48K, Plus or 128K, you'll need an

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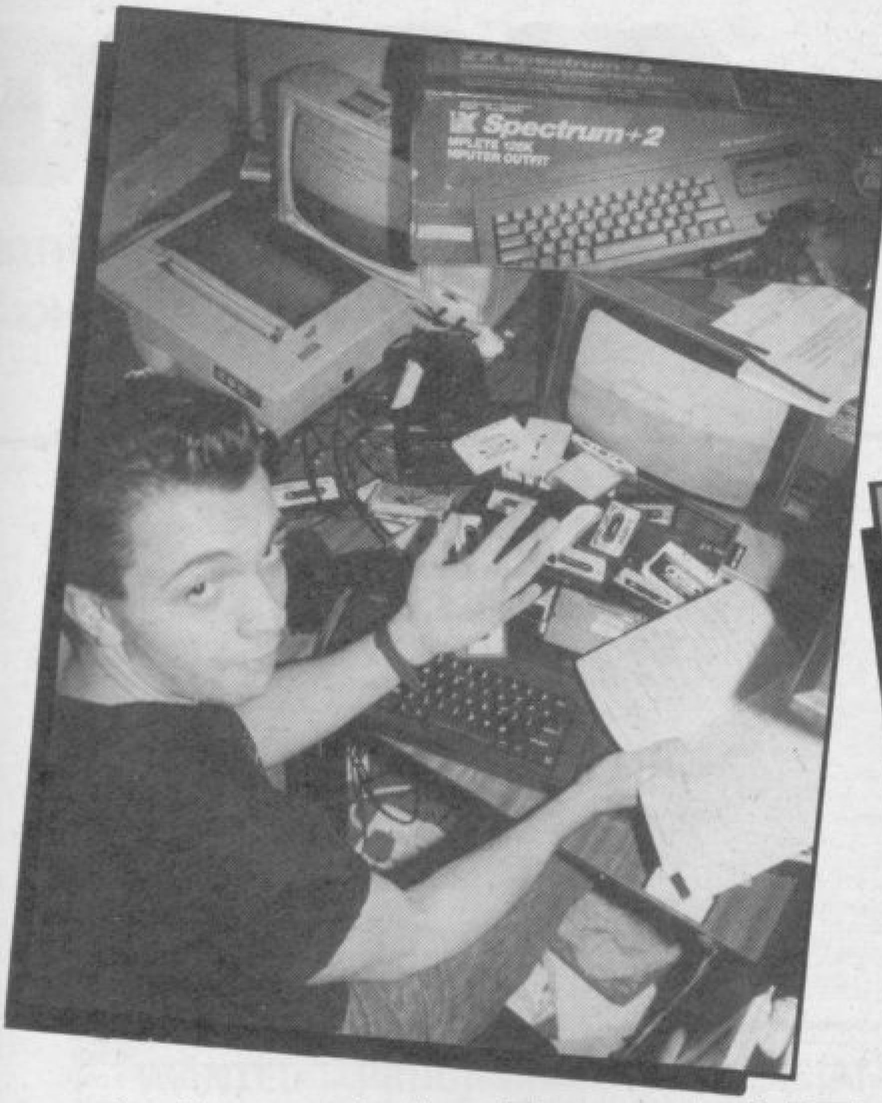






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E TO THE SPECTRUM







external tape recorder. A cheap one will do. It is NOT necessary to invest £850 in a Nakamichi ProTech FlashJobbie Remote-controlled Hi-Fi Technostack.

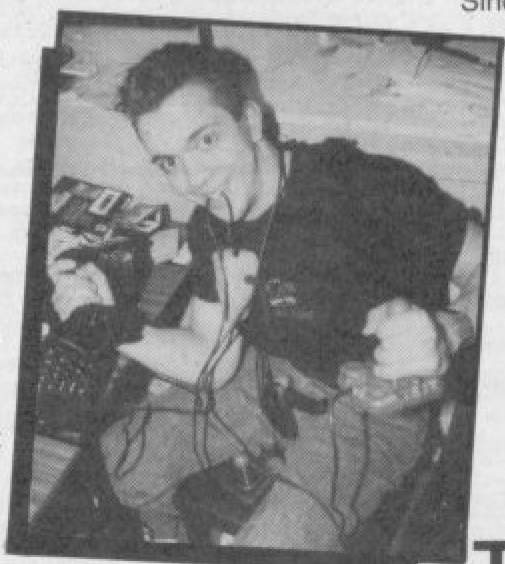
If you have a Plus 2, just wodge your tape into the deck and prepare for misery as it fails to load.

These days practically all computers are sold with bundled software. Even with the Cray One comes a simple Frogger variant. Spectrums come with collections of past hits. After playing these you will have a fair idea of whether you have wasted your money and should have bought a BMX StreetStonker instead.

Read the manual. If you don't read the manual, don't come whining to us for advice. Your joystick will not work unless you plug it in. You will not get any sound unless you turn the volume up (and maybe not even then). If you shove any peripherals into the back of the computer while it is plugged in, you will blow it up. All these are unchanging rules by which the whole universe abides.

5 . . . THE JOY OF GAME-PLAYING

In the early days of the Spectrum, because there



wasn't any more powerful competition, people used it for all sorts of dull things like doing their accounts, keeping train-spotting records and working out how much wallpaper was needed to cover Scotland. If you want to do that, fine. Just don't ask us where to get the software.

It is also a myth that using a computer can be educational. Unless you are a total divvy, you will learn more from one half-hour botany lesson than from a lifetime of educational software with titles like "Mr Blobby Learns to Count", "French for legumes" or "Spotty and Dimbo go



Nuclear Engineering".

NO! Spectrums are for PLAYING GAMES, and let's not forget it! Whether it's a pixie adventure game, a mindless blaster or a crucially tedious recreation of the Battle of Ponce (Cavaliers vs Egyptians, 1322), you will all choose your favourite types. And remember, you'll read all the hottest reviews and sharpest comments in Sinclair User (says our promotions department, and God knows they need all the publicity they can get).

6 . . . WHAT THEY DON'T TELL YOU

When they tell you that the Spectrum is a fab computer which will provide you with hours of entertainment, that the Plus 3 has a fab disk drive which loads games in seconds, and that owning a Spectrum will make you a fab person, WHAT are they HIDING?

For a start, the endless family arguments about who's going to use the TV. Get a spare unless you enjoy head injuries. Second, the endless journeys to the software shop to replace faulty tapes. "Er . . . it must have been a duff batch" isn't much comfort when you've just walked eleven miles through pouring rain to return your fifth copy of "Killer Slugs from Milton Keynes".

They also don't tell you that if the computer goes wrong, it will take you between a year and a century to get it fixed. It's often easier to hollow it out and turn it into a nice plant pot.

They also don't tell you that ten minutes after you've spent all your pocket money on the latest £14.99 coin-op conversion, it will turn up in one week on a compilation of last month's greatest hits along with twelve other games for £2.99.

And they don't tell you that you'll NEVER, EVER write your own programs. Sure you MIGHT knock together something primitive in Basic (if you can get over the fact that they've taken all the keywords off the keyboard). But you'll NEVER learn machine code. NO-ONE can program in machine code. It's just TOO DIFFICULT. Once every century ONE PERSON is born who understands machine code. And they can't explain it to anyone else. That's why there are so few good games about, and so much pooh.

Next month – how to put your computer back in its box and on top of the wardrobe.

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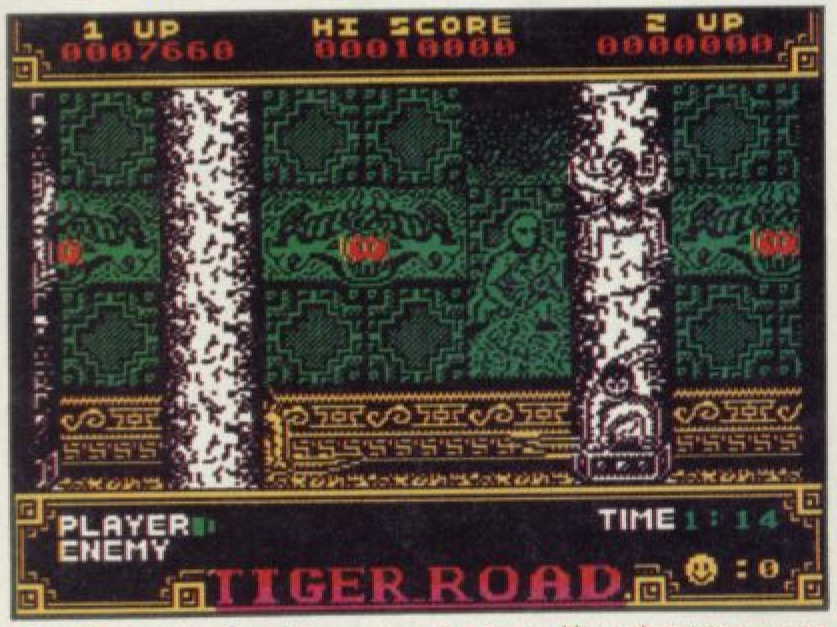
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TIGER ROAD



US Gold in Own-Trumpet Blow Shock!

"Undoubtedly one of the greatest martial arts games ever written". Yeh? And I'm the King of Siam.

Tiger Road is definitely one of the most reasonable martial arts games ever written, and that's about the sum of it. Ropey storyline for a start. Kiddies kidnapped by evil emperor to be trained as horrible assassins. Lee Wong, loyal disciple of Goodness and Light, decides to embark on rescue mission. Iffy eh?

Tiger Road is USG's nth Capcom licence and so has an awful lot to live up to in the shadow of **Streetfighter** and **1943**. Unfortunately, it doesn't quite make it for reasons I'll explain later. First, let's break down exactly what's going on.

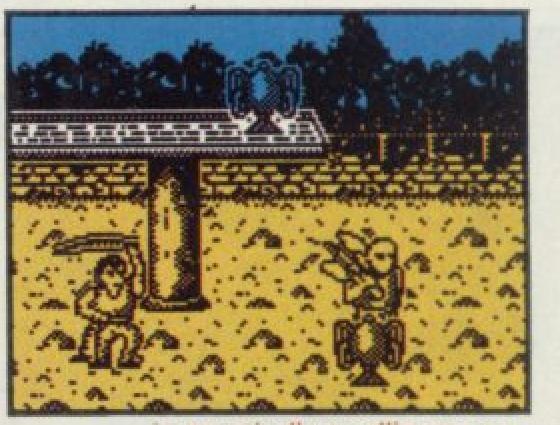
The screen scrolls from right to left and the graphics aren't too great. Your character moves around the screen somewhat jerkily. In most of the scenes there's a fair bit of colour, but there's been no attempt – so far as I could tell – to minimise attribute nightmares.

The bad guys you're up against are wild-eyed kamikaze ninja psychopaths. There's the little pestering sort who inflicts small, but frequent amounts of damage, and there's the huge end-of-level characters who can kill you straight off.

Combatting the meanies is more simple than in most of this ilk. No special moves – just a "strike" key which will employ whatever weapon you have at the time.

Extra weapons can be picked up by breaking open pots which litter the area. There's a mace, an axe and a stick, none of which seem to be any more or less effective than the others.

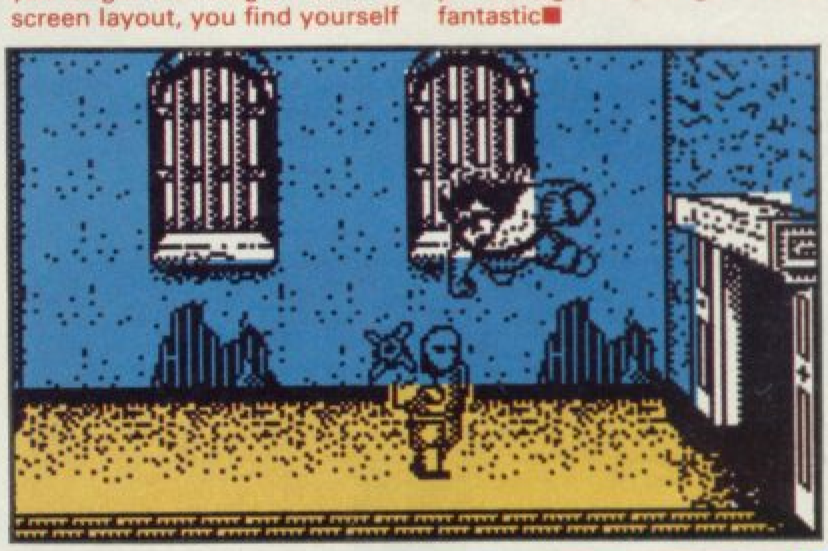
Although things aren't sounding too fantastic so far, **Tiger Road** isn't without its merits. It's played across a large area of streets and tunnels and abandoned palaces and the action is pretty constant. You can bypass some baddies by hurtling up staircases or jumping over them.

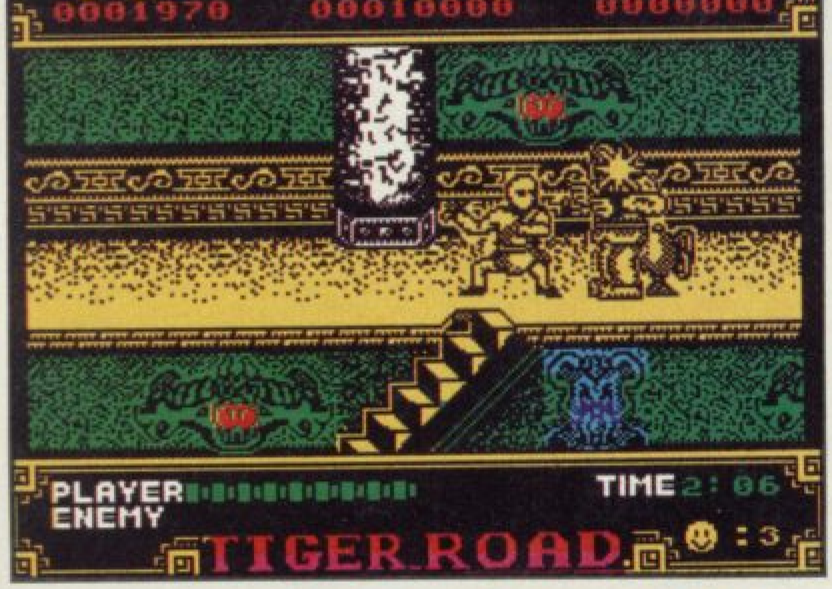


The further into the game you get, the tougher the rooms get. From the straightforward street scene, when a bunch of Ninjas are your only foes, you graduate to enclosed rooms with horrid fluffy monsters which jump around and savage you.

It definitely gets better as things go along, and there doesn't seem to be any lack of imagination on the gameplay front. Just when you think you've got the hang of the screen layout, you find yourself in a vertically scrolling room being chased all over the shop by dragon heads. Phwer.

Tiger Road is perfectly reasonable, there's lots going on and it's neither too easy or too hard. I think it's simply the polishing-off section where its development maybe fell down. The graphics move quickly, but they jerk and what colour there is clashes like billio. Most of these things are nearly excusable but you really shouldn't invite criticism by professing that your game is so fantastic■





ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

TIGER ROAD *Label:* **Capcom** *Author:* In house *Price:* **£8.95** *Memory:* **48K/128K** *Joystick:* **Various**

GRAPHICS	SOUND
60	64
70	70
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Reasonable though unastonishing ninja game. Worth a look.

Reviewer: Jim Douglas

OVERALL **69**

DATEL ELECTRONICS



ROBOTARM

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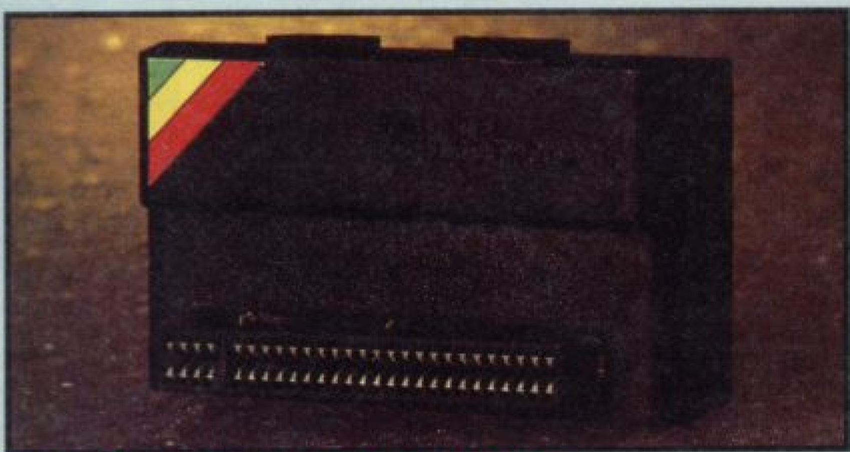
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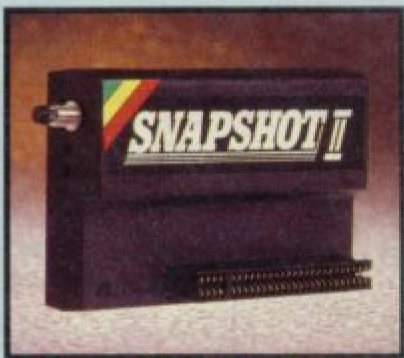
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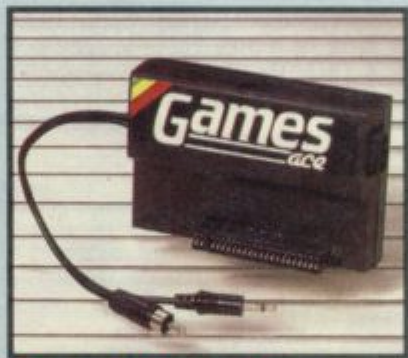
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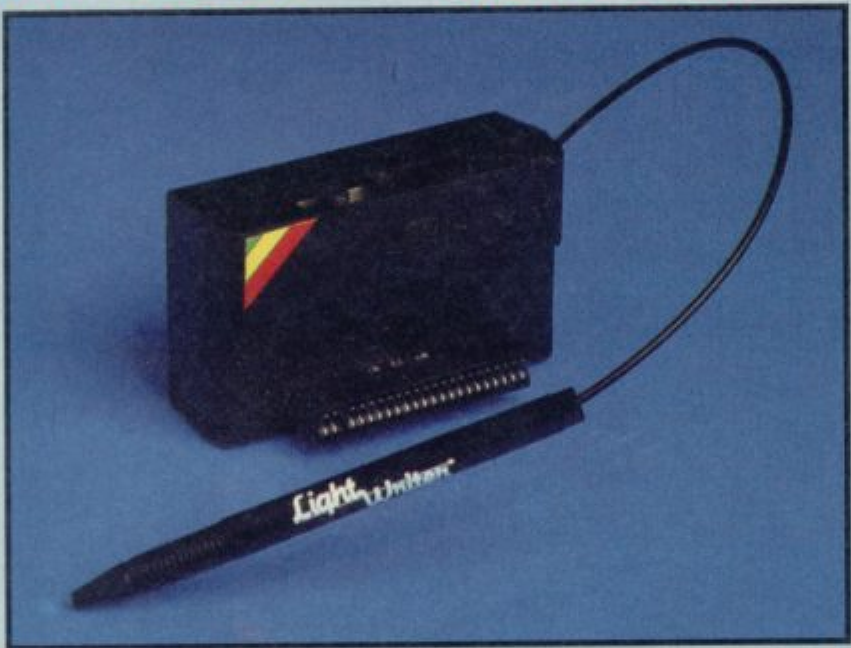
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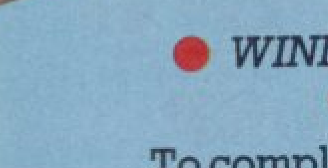
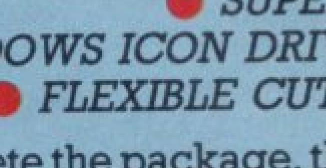
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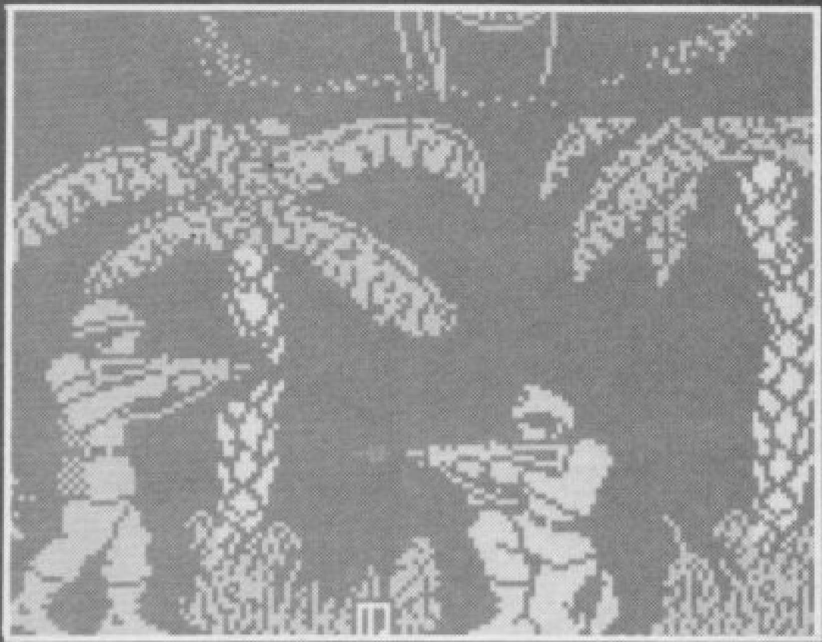
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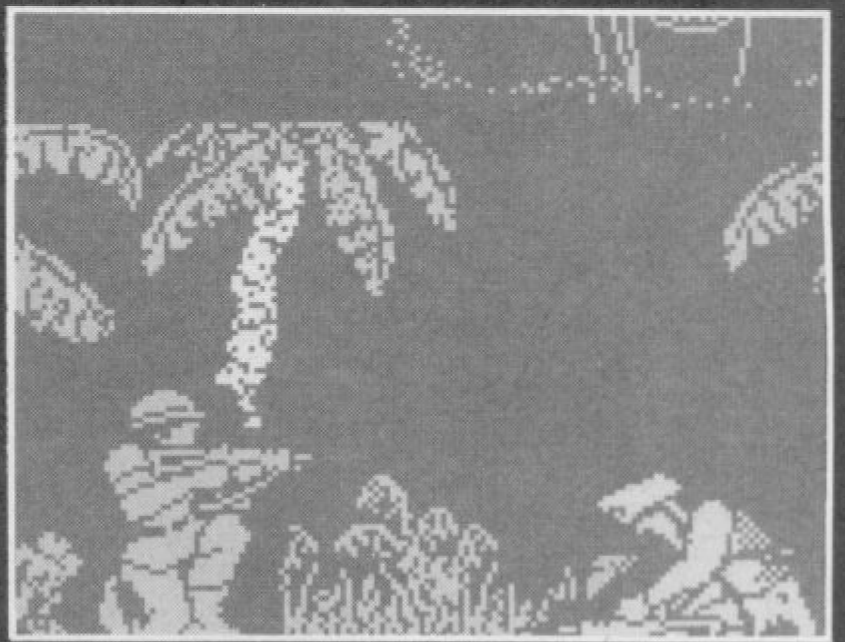
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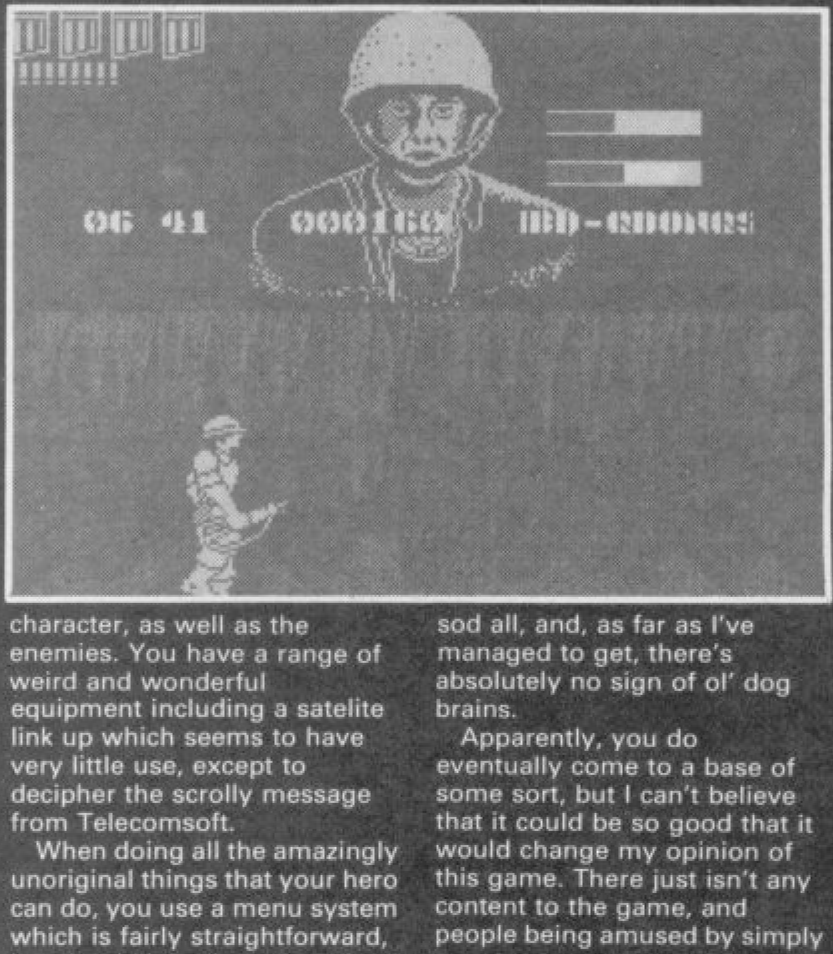


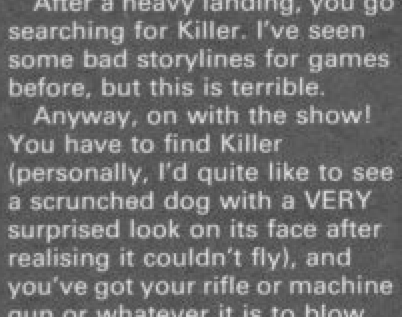


GI HERO

In a politically sensitive country, a spy has nicked some peace documents (things are sounding original aren't they?), and you have been sent in to go 'yee har, kill, maim' and give that bad ol' spy a slap on the wrist. This is **G.I. Hero.**

The flight in sees you apparently meeting up with another trained loony, a dog, quantly called Killer. This is when the plane's engines fo phawarrowwwwcrooow and Killer (who obviously has more brains than you) decides to take his chances while you're still in the air, and jumps from the plane.





After a heavy landing, you go searching for Killer. I've seen some bad storylines for games before, but this is terrible.

Anyway, on with the show! You have to find Killer (personally, I'd quite like to see a scrunched dog with a VERY surprised look on its face after realising it couldn't fly), and you've got your rifle or machine gun or whatever it is to blow away all the naughty men who try to stop you finding the kamikaze canine.

The graphics are big and well animated with quite a few different stances for the main character, as well as the enemies. You have a range of weird and wonderful equipment including a satelite link up which seems to have very little use, except to decipher the scrolly message from Telecomsoft.

When doing all the amazingly unoriginal things that your hero can do, you use a menu system which is fairly straightforward, but should have been explained slightly better for all the 'Fickos', as Jim calls them.

In **G.I. Hero,** you seem to spend much of your time doing sod all, and, as far as I've managed to get, there's absolutely no sign of ol' dog brains.



Apparently, you do eventually come to a base of some sort, but I can't believe that it could be so good that it would change my opinion of this game. There just isn't any content to the game, and people being amused by simply shooting things for hours are few and far between nowadays, but if you are one of those people I'd recommend this game to you.

I was slightly bewildered by the fact that there was no mention of music in the high score table, but I couldn't hear nuffink from one tune on loading, and bleak effects, with a few chirruping crickets.

Well, that's all I can say about **G.I. Hero,** it's just uncommentonforverylong and quite mediocre when compared to scrumidlyuptious games that we've seen in recent months.

I think this game would have been better as a Silverbird game instead of a full-pricer■



ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

G.I. HERO *Label:* **Firebird** *Author:* **N. Brown** *Price:* **£7.95** *Memory:* **48K/128K** *Joystick:* **Various**

GRAPHICS	SOUND
70	40
60	45
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Playable yet uninteresting game with stupid storyline.

Reviewer: Steve Mahoney

OVERALL **45**

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

IF you reckon we're talking rubbish don't just stand there . . .

Tell us what you think.

Stick your comments on paper, fill in and cut out the coupon below and send it in . . .



GRAHAM

GARFIELD

Quick somebody give this maniac Taylor a few years off. I am of course talking about **Garfield.** This mega crud makes **Living Daylights** look cool. Okay the graphics are brilliant, but I think they forgot playability, sound and lastability ever existed when they made this game. The game is as playable as a soggy cornflake and the sound is zilch. How could you give this game a Classic, you've just let the mag down. Mind you, I still think your mag is ultra crucial even after this tragedy.

David Ratcliffe
Northumberland
Putting his fiver towards: Operation Wolf

● Graham says: Also poor Yorrick, I knew him well. Now that was a tragedy.

FOOTBALL MANAGER 2

While reading your super cosmic mag I read Graham's review of the 'mega' **Football Manager 2.** I immediately jumped on the next bus to town and forked out my last tenner on it. When I returned home I played the game for 30 seconds and observed that it was total crap and mega-unrealistic.

It was so crummy I had to pull the plug on it! If it was re-released for 10p only a midless moron (Graham!) would buy it. I would give it 2% for graphics. If you do not print this letter I will send it to you! 1st class!! Now what do you think of that?

CP Woolhouse
Lancs
Putting his fiver towards: Afterburner

● Graham says: Well not a lot actually. He was far too bored to comment on your specific complaints. However he asks what do you think about the subject of the rights of dumb animals? Or what about the ozone layer?

FABBO COMMENTS

Briliant! That's the only way to describe Sinclair User. Recently, I bought Sinclair User for the first time. It was so good, I got the November edition as well. The reviews are superb. I found their information dead accurate. I am fed up with Graham, Chris, Tony and Jim being criticised though, I think they are wicked. Keep up the good work lads. But I have one question to ask. Who is GT? (popping up everywhere!) and if you don't print this, I will cry, and I won't get your mag for ever and ever, so there! By the way, I am getting **Tracksuit Manager** because you said it was a Classic! No complaints about Sinclair User!!!

Christopher Goodchild
Essex
Putting his fiver towards: Track Suit Manager

● This does make a change. Someone actually agreeing with us about the fact that we are better than everybody else. GT is, in fact, none other than our very own El Presidente, who just like in real life, pops up everywhere. Did you know that if you jumble up the letters in your name, add a few and take some away, you get 'Mrs. Dillon'. I smell something fishy.

Your magazine is undoubtedly one of the best on the market at the moment (what do you mean 'at the moment'?).

So why, when reviewing games, do you insist on using Commodore screen dumps. We know that they have superior graphics. When I read a review I am still not sure that the graphics are as good as you say, due to the fact that we never see them.

Although I must admit that you are starting to use more Spectrum screen shots, but at the moment I don't know whether to call the mag Sinclair User or Sinclair & Commodore User or Sinclair User's text & Commodore graphics or even Sincodore User.

S J Longworth
Putting his fiver towards: Ninja Scooter Simulator

● What are you on? We haven't printed a C64 screenshot since 1924, and you weren't even born then, so how do you remember. Go away.

CHRIS



OVERLANDER

You silly little poo Jenkins! Has your brain fallen out of your ear? You plop. Why did you give **Overlander** 81%? It's worth at least 100%, wally. My +2 is now recovering from the shock of me playing this brill game on it. The graphics are worth 99% and the sound is worth 99% and my +2 still hasn't got its breath back.

This game is brill. Buy it today. The megatapes are brill, by the way, but if you don't print this review I shall flush all my SU's down the loo and never buy SU again. Bye bye.

Carl Redfern
West Midlands
Putting his fiver towards: Operation Wolf

● Chris says: I know it's a good game, that's why I gave it a good mark. Even if my brain had fallen out of my ear, I'd still have twice as many brain cells as you. By the way, we don't care if you flush all your SU mags down the pan. After all, who paid for them?



TONY

TRACKSUIT MANAGER

How on earth did Tony Dillon get something right! "Mum get me an aspirin, please." What I am writing about is Tony Dillon's review of **Tracksuit Manager**. I saw it, 93%, whoopee! Get that. I got it home, loaded it in, and it didn't load. Poo! So I turned it over and it loaded, MEGA! This game is so cool I didn't hear Mum calling me for tea, AAARGH. No tea. The only snag is when you choose your own team and type all your players in, they're all crap. A question to leave you with. Has Tony Dillon turned over a new leaf?

Iain Sisson
Sutton

● Dillon says: Glad you agree. In answer to your question, I'm just turning the same old leaf over and over again.

DALEY THOMPSON'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE '88

If I ever see Tony Dillon in a dark alley, he will wish that he had never heard of **DTOC**. He gave this brilliant game only 72% when the mark should have been a classic. The graphics are MEGACOOL which is more than I can say about the thing on the front of your mag which you like to call a game. OK, the sound is not the best around but the end product is much better than the original. SO GO SUCK AN EGG.

Michael Meehan
Nottingham

● Dillon says: I never said it wasn't better than the original, but come on, it's hardly a brilliant game is it. By the way, you name the alley, and I'll be there.

The WRITE STUFF?!

DALEY THOMPSON'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE

Tony Dillon doesn't know what he's talking about. 72% A lousy 72% for **Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge**, yes that's what I'm on about. It deserves 80,000,000,000. It's brilliant. Okay, it may ache your arms, but at least I know what I'm talking about. What's this then? Ripping off their own ideas? They're better than you matey. I agree with the brill graphics and sound, but playability? I couldn't get off it.

When I saw it in the shop (censored name), I thought I'd wait for you to review it, but why put 72 for a joystick knackering, mega trendy game. You'd better give me your dosh or else I'll set the Kamikaze Bear on you. Still, I think you mag's brill.

Paul Mountney
Birmingham

● Dillon says: I don't know you, so don't you dare call me matey. Jon Riglar's the only one who calls me matey, but he lives in Plymouth, so that's alright. The whole point of the playability mark is to let you know generally how good the control is and how well the game plays. Continual left and right on the joystick for hours on end is neither fun or playable. So bog off.

LASER SQUAD

LAY OFF TONY! He may have slated some games, and quite rightly too, they're crap compared to **Laser Squad,** well deserving its 89%. If you think strategy games are dull and boring, think again!

The normal, deformed graphics have been replaced by brightly coloured, highly detailed graphics and the gameplay is nerve racking, you could be anihilated at any moment. Add tons of vicious weapons to play around with and a wickedly tough opponent that knocks others for six and you have a Classic game. The only niggling point is the lack of a quit button when you cause your mission to be doomed. Buy it!

Oliver Batliss
Surrey
Putting his fiver towards: Rex

● Tony says: Glad you liked it. I've just been speaking to the Gallup boys, and they tell me the expansion pack is ready now, so get that order in the post.



JIM

GAME OVER II

I don't know what you're playing at Jim, only giving a mega brill game like **Game Over II** 67% is a serious offence and if you do it again then YOU DIE – get the drift.

As soon as **Game Over II** was released I zoooooomed out to buy it. I played it, found out the access code and completed it and now you can't get me off the old Speccy (ooer). So I advise EVERYBODY to get it.

I reckon it should get 85% for graphics, 93% for game play, 70% for sound and 90% for lastability.

Antony Gayter
Poole
Putting his fiver towards: Operation Wolf

● Game Over II was bordering on plop. I can't believe you'd give it anything like those marks. Methinks the cold weather has affected your brain.

R-TYPE

If Jim doesn't immediately Classic this game, I'll rip out his eyes and stick **R-Type** down his throat. This is the best ever, sponditious, crucial, mega wicked game! The colour and spectacular explosions, as well as the aliens, beat any other Spectrum game into the ground, even **Operation Wolf** (which isn't very hard to complete). Every time you play **R-type** you get a little further so the lastability goes up. I'm on level four, but there are eight, so it's not easy.

This kicks **Salamander** into 1982 and beats up **Zynaps** with its little finger. **R-Type** is a part of Spectrum history, the best ever shoot-'em-up. Anyone who doesn't have it is, in a word, totally lame!

Ian Gorski
London
Putting his fiver towards: Aterburner or Robocop

● Jim says: So you agree then?

TARGET RENEGADE

ARGH! Jimbo you are a triffic reviewer for giving **Target Renegade** 10 out of 10. You were so right, the graphics are superb, the sound is good and although the scrolling isn't too ace, it is still a good game, well put together and presented.

The two player option is a good idea, so you work as a team. Also the different scenarios eg Car Park, Shopping Precinct, Bouncers in a pub are really great.

Skinheads, Beastie Boys, Dogs, Hells Angels and Ladies of the night are all in it, if **Target Renegade** hasn't got it then it's probably not worth seeing anyway.

All in all an excellent game and a whole lot of fun for the daft price of £7.95 (they must be mad).

Jayson Snipe
Birmingham
Putting his fiver towards: Crazy Cars

OCTAN

Octan 75% overall, are you mad Jim (yes, completely)? This game is the best ever (for £2.99) and it should have got a classic. The graphics are brill and it's so hard to complete it's 100% addictive.

In the review you said it cost £2.99, then in the Fax Box you said it was £1.99. It was, in fact, £2.99, but this does not change the excellent game play.

Great work Silverbird, keep it up.

Paul Wilburn
Debdale
Putting his fiver towards: Buggy Boy

● So let me get this straight. Although it actually costs £2.99, we printed £1.99 in the fax box although we said it was £2.99 in the review, but when you bought it you discovered that people were selling it for £2.99 even though – (shut up – GT).

Every so often – well very often actually – you write to tell us that we know nothing about anything and insist that some program we trashed is actually the best game ever. Conversely you blast us for saying something is great that you absolutely loath and detest.

Enough is enough. We can't take any more, if you think you're as clever you write the damn magazine. We mean it!

Every month we'll devote a page to a selection of your opinions on the latest software. Don't get mad – write the review you think the game should have received and we (subject only to space) will print it.

Now, aside from seeing your work in print we will send you a crisp £5 – or cheque – to put towards the software title of your choice – tell us what you plan to spend the money on if your review is printed.

You've probably noticed that we don't print pictures any more, so you can stop sending them. Jim only sticks them on his typewriter and burns a hole in them anyway.

So get cracking – write your reviews and send them together with the completed coupon below.

YOUR REVIEWS

Maximum 150 words. No swearing, libel or illegibility and come out of the corner fighting. Don't beat around the bush – tell us straight what you think. Send your review (or any recent game) and fill in the coupon. *Send the lot to The Write Stuff, Sinclair User, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

Name..

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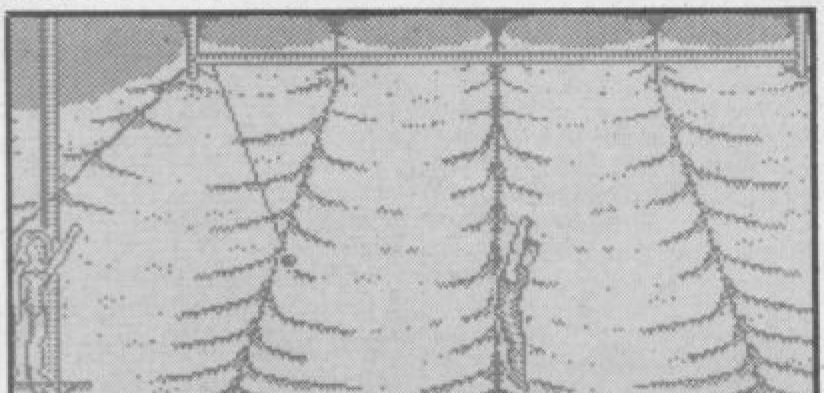
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***Reviews supplied without full name and address will not be considered for publication.**

GAMES REVIEW

CIRCUS GAMES

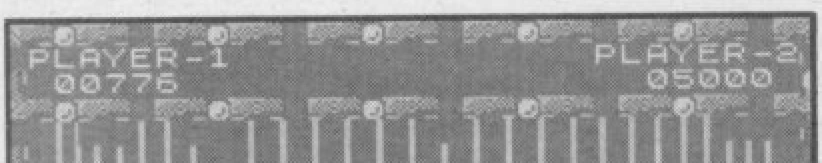
Whether it's complete and utter coincidence, whether great minds think alike, or whether one pinched the idea from the other, it's remarkable that TWO arcade games based on the circus should appear in the same month; especially since there are hardly any circuses left in operation in real life. I mean, you wouldn't expect anyone to do an Olde-Tyme Variety Music Hall game would you?

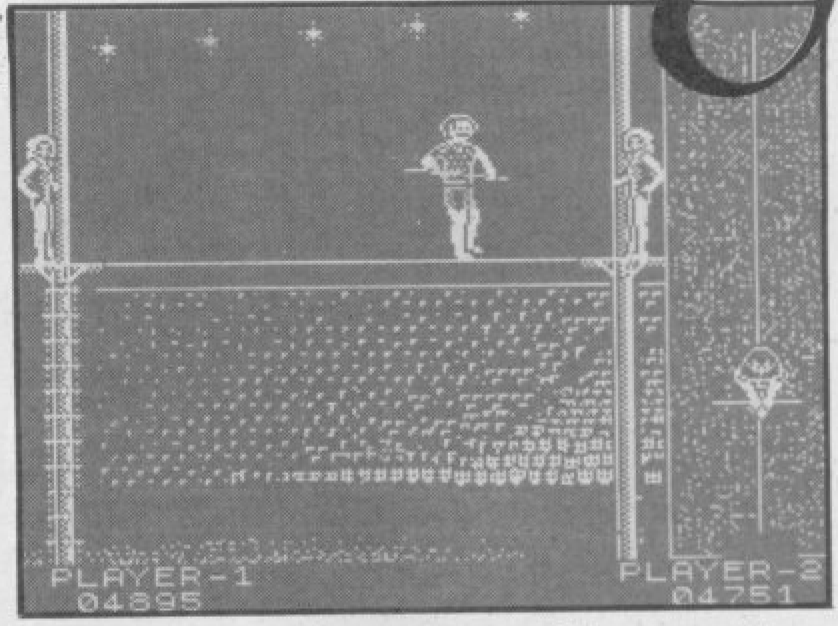


What's remarkable about **Circus Games** – if anything can be said to be remarkable about it – is that it's a licence. Yes, the famous Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey "Greatest Show on Earth" has singled out Tynesoft for the honour of having their name on the cover of **Circus Games**; they obviously don't know as much about Speccy games as they do about mucking out tigers.

What we have here is a collection of four events. You can quit any one and move on to the next load if you wish, but obviously to finish the game you must succeed in all four events; Tiger Taming, High Wire, Trapeze and Trick Horse Riding (that's doing tricks while riding a horse, not a funny collapsing animal).

The graphics are unremarkable throughout, and the music is hideous, which is a bit of a shock since it's by David Whittaker. The first event, Tiger Taming, is particularly poor. The aim is to make the tigers perform three tricks; you have a whip and a chair, and must keep



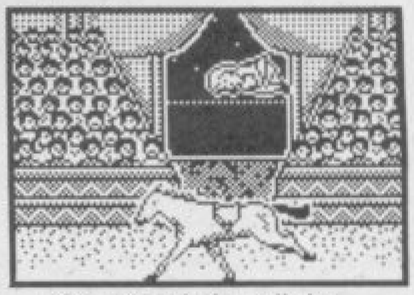


all three under control if you hope to escape uneaten. The tricks vary from making the tigers walk through tubes, to walking them from one side of the cage to the other; very exciting, you'll agree.

The next event, Trapeze, is a bit better; left and right makes you swing higher on the trapeze, fire makes you jump to the other trapeze and perform a somersault. It's unfortunate that the animation is too slow to make things very thrilling.

Event three, Tightrope, COULD have been interesting. It features a split-screen display, and demands that you move across the tightrope while balancing your big pole (oo-er). In the middle you have to perform a somersault, which is tricky as you tend to lose your balance on landing. tightrope is quite good fun; pity there isn't a bit more to it.

Lastly and leastly, Trick Horse Riding. Here, you balance a stunted Christmas-tree fairy on the slowest-moving horse you've ever seen. Her task is to avoid custard pies thrown by the clown, to jump through hoops and so on.



After completing all the events you must load the Menu section to display your high score, but frankly my dears I wouldn't bother. There's nothing in **Circus Games** to really make you want to get involved – though **Circus Circus** from Martech is superficially similar, it's a whole lot better than this bag of tricks■

FAX BOX

ARCADE REVIEW

CIRCUS GAMES *Label:* **Tynesoft** *Author:* **Subway Software** *Price:* **£8.95/£14.95** *Memory:* **48K/128K** *Joystick:* **Various**

Not the greatest show on earth by a long shot.

Reviewer:

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY	OVERALL
60	40	45	39	50

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90



Time for our regular look at new choccie bars to help you through a tough afternoon.

CADBURY'S STRAWBERRY CREME 21p Milk chocolate with strawberry flavoured fondant centre – that's goo to you and me. Jim: "I thought it was nice." Alison: "Boring and bland. Pooh." Chris: "A bit sickly." VERDICT: Give it a miss.

TERRY'S LOGGER 19p Milk chocolate with 54% unidentified gunge. Jim: "Hurts your mouth when you bite it off." Alison: "Pooh." Chris: "Like eating polyfilla." VERDICT: Good for wedging doors open.

CADBURY'S ICE BREAKER 24p Blend of milk and plain chocolate with minty chips. Jim: "Orright, but I prefer Matchmakers." Alison: "Slightly less pooey than the others." Chris: "Very festive. Feed it to the reindeer." VERDICT: Not too bad.

TERRY'S DARK 22p Plain chocolate with almonds and raisins. Jim: "Didn't do anything for me." Alison: "Too healthy for me." Chris: "I don't like the almonds. Or the raisins. And I don't think much of the chocolate." VERDICT: Ucky.

TOBLERONE DARK 89p Plain version of the famous Swiss bar. Jim: "I'd rather be having a white Toblerone." Alison: "It got stuck in my teeth." Chris: "Great. Pity I can't afford it." VERDICT: An expensive luxury.

OVERALL VERDICT: Stick with the apples and oranges, mates!

SU says: Remember kids, don't eat too much chocolate as it makes your toothy-pegs drop out.

COUPON
The first reader to send us a photo-booth type piccy of themselves with a whole bagful of Maltesers in their gob will win all of the above chocolates.

Name..
Address...
..

Send to: 'mmf mmf, I've got a mush full of choc,' Sinclair User, 30-32 Priory Court, Farringdon Lane, LONDON EC1

OUT!

VIDEO VOTE!

Power of the Lens
Harmony Gold



This one's a blast; one of the seemingly endless selection of Japanese sci-fi epic cartoons, featuring some incredible film-like animation, fantastic hardware designs and fast-moving plots.

If you're familiar with the **Lensman** series by E.E. "Doc" Smith, you'll recognise many of the elements of this vid; two ancient civilisations, the Arisians and Eddorians, battle for control of the galaxy. The evil Eddorians use the pirates of Boskone as their agents; the Arisians use the Lensmen, heroioc warriors given superhuman powers by the semi-living Lens grafted to their hands. The latest Lensman is young Human Kim Kinnison, and together with the axe-wielding giant Van Buskirk he takes on menaces including alien slavers, living spaceships and carnivorous underwater palm trees. Great fun – let's hope there are more Lensman vids on the way (oh yes, let's – AS).

Monster Squad

If you enjoyed Ghostbusters, Gremlins, Ghoulies or

NDS.



The ultimate accessory for all you lazy swines. We've had remote contol TV. We've had those ludicrous robot things that will carry the Radio Times from one sofa-bound zombie to another. Now even the most lazy sod in the whole world won't have an excuse not to watch nowadays, thanks to TV SPECTACLES!

Yes. For the outlandish sum of £35 (yes, Thirty-five Pounds Sterling) FFWD in Newburgh Street (Carnaby Street's back door) will supply you with a pair of very well made specs. They're a complicated arrangement of prisms and nose-guards, but unlike any other pair of glasses, they allow you to see at virtually any angle you desire.

Best employed while lying flat on your back or in ultra-recline mode on your Sealy Saville armchair, you can watch TV without having to raise your neck a jot, the specs can be used for a host of other things. You can wear them while walking along and see exactly what your legs look like as you do it. You can, urm, well that's about your lot really. Still, great value, eh?

Captions:

Space Invader in disguise? No. It's those crazy TV SPECTACLES!

"Get this thing off me!" (say the spectacles)



First person to send us an envelope marked "Blimey-o-flip I bet you a Malteser that I'm the first person with the right answer" Competition, Sinclair User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, and enclose the correct answer to the following stonker of a question and a single Malteser will win the TV Spectacles shown here.

Extremely wacky captions: **The television shown on pages 48 and 53 is made by whom?**

anything else beginning with a G, you'll dig **Monster Squad,** a spoof horror film which lovingly recreates the villains of all the classic monster movies; Dracula, Frankenstein's monster, Wolfman, the Mummy, and the Gillman (from Creature from the Black Lagoon). Set in small-town America, the film features some excellent special effects and great costumes, especially for the Gillman. Only Dracula, played by someone who looks like an extra from Hill Street Blues, fails to convince. The plot's not too taxing; a group of monster-obsessed kids take it upon themselves to save the world when they realise that all the famous monsters have got together to celebrate the centenary of Dracula's escape from Transylvania. With the help of a German folklore expert, Dad's police Magnum loaded with silver bullets, and copious amounts of garlic, they set out to find a talisman they need to destroy the monsters. Loads of black humour, movie jokes and genuinely scarey moments make **Monster Squad** an excellent rental.



CODE TALK

What a lively bunch of chappies (sorry, and girlies) those Ocean bods are. One minute they're off to the theatre, next minute they're whizzing along in their broom broomers, next minute they're watching the telly – phew, not enough days in the week for this lot. Us weedos at SU finally caught up with them and had a chat about games, hobbies and life in general – so here we go . . .



THEY'VE BEEN IN THE COMPUTER GAMES BUSINESS FOR SQUILLIONS OF YEARS

Mike: I've worked with computer games since '83 and worked on **Steve Davis Snooker.**
Dawn: I've been in this business a few years now. I used to work in advertising as an illustrtor.

FALLING AROUND DRUNK IN NIGHTCLUBS IS WHAT THEY DO BEST

We're so busy at the moment you just wouldn't believe, but when the rush is over we're going to hop off to the nearest nightclub and go completely wild.

THEY DON'T HAVE PETS!

Mike: I don't have any pets.
Dawn: No I don't have any pets either.

GOSH, THEY DON'T HALF LOVE THEIR JOBS

Mike: The best thing about my job is going into shops and seeing a game that I've worked on up there on the shelves, especially if it's doing well. It it isn't doing so well then I ignore it.
Dawn: The nicest thing about working here is the friendly people and the relaxed atmosphere.

THEY WATCH ROBOCOP: THE MOVIE 24 HOURS A DAY

To get ideas for the **Robocop** game we were going to do a straight copy of the Arcade game, but that wasn't exciting enough so we watched the film instead. All the really juicy bits that stuck in our minds from the film were the bits we decided to use.

MIKE IS DAWN'S CHAUFFEUR, IN FACT!!

Dawn: I don't own a car at the moment, but I'd like to buy an MG one day.
Mike: I have got a car of my very own (tough luck, Dawn), it's a Toyota Celica.

THEY LIVE IN HUGE CASTLES WITH MOATS AROUND THEM

Dawn: I don't live in a huge castle, in fact I've just moved into a little flat not far from work and when I'm home I love to watch Brookside on the goggle box.
Mike: I live near work in a wee flat too and watch Eastenders all the time, I love it.

MIKE WOULD LIKE TO BE A NUTTY ACID HOUSE PERSON

Acid House music is pretty good. I like the idea of everyone having a good time and wearing what they feel confortable in, great stuff. Apart from that I like the Rolling Stones and Bob Dylan (a couple of old wrinkly rocksters from a hundred years ago).
Dawn: I don't mind House music but I'm not crazy about Acid House. I prefer alternative music from groups like Midnight Oil (whodatden? – JD).

THEY CAN SEE INTO THE FUTURE

In the next few months there's a chance that we'll be working on maybe a sequel to **Robocop** or **Renegade III.**

TH



"Of course the Sorceress doesn't shave her legs!" I thundered at a junior member of the Academy, and immediately turned him into a frog. I could see that Sorceress's Question Time was not going to be a good idea.

Even a Sorceress can suffer from post-Christmas depression.

An interesting journal has come into my possession, a journal surrounded by secrecy, mysterious advertisements in the press, a bewildering trail that led to . . . Official Secrets. The journal is called Confidential, and the first issue featured articles by adventure columnists such as Mike Gerrard, Tony Bridge and Sandra Sharkey.

Tony and Sandra are talking about role-playing games, I note, and Mike gives us a "whistle-stop tour of some of the better, small, independent software houses." Everybody subscribing to this journal is given a membership number, which must be used when ordering any of their special offer software. Special offers such as **Black Lamp** for £3.99, which was mentioned in the first issue. This is only for subscribers to Official Secrets and the journal Confidential, and not for members of another club that is promoted by the same company.

This club goes under the name of Special Reserve, which gives a catalogue of all the software that they currently have on offer.

Software from all the major companies is sold through the Special Reserve catalogue, normally at half price, and there is also a mini-review of some of the games. A handy feature. They also run a helpline. So where do we find all these delights? PO Box 847, Harlow, Essex CM21 9PH, (0279) 600204.

As some of you may have already taken advantage of these wondrous offers and obtained **Silicon Dreams,** I shall now dwell on this subject at some length. The three games in this trilogy were originally released individually by Level 9, but have now been combined and enhanced for all we Spectrum owners.

The games in question are **The Worm in Paradise, Return to Eden,** and **Snowball,** each a classic in its own right, and now a tremendous bargain at the price being offered by Special Reserve. **The Worm in Paradise** is a confusing game for beginners, in that there is no straightforward solution. The game can change each time you play it, and the most awkward of the changes (and therefore the most puzzling aspect of the game) concerns what is called the Eden Transport System, or ETS for short.

The ETS consists of three ETS roundabouts, all accessible from the Northmost roundabout. They are uniquely colour coded, by the first colour mentioned on a grid location, as follows: RED is for ETS "East", BROWN is the ETS "North", and BLACK is the ETS "West". When entering an ETS type "JUMP" to reach the centre and "SAY EXIT" to leave (then South).

MATT LUCAS

As it's such a short solution, and so many people seem to be having problems with this game, what follows is the COMPLETE SOLUTION. Don't read on if you don't want to know. But if you do . . .

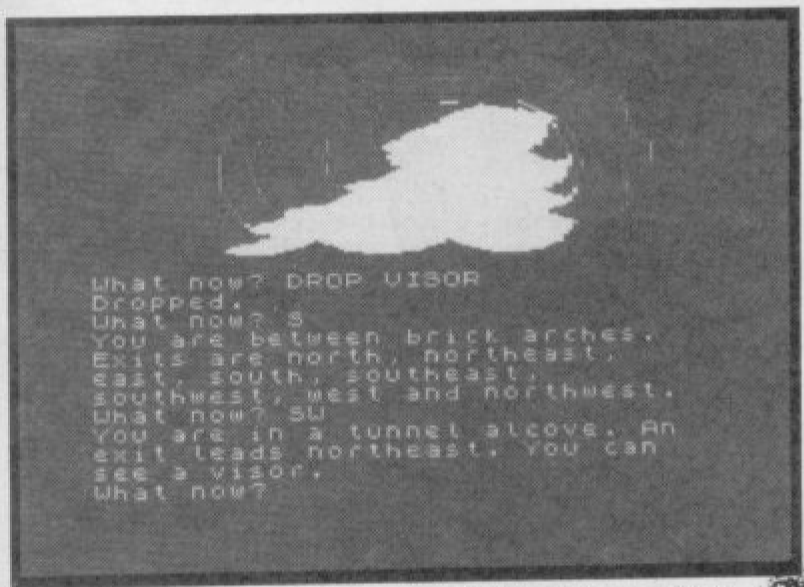
N, W, TAKE CONTAINER, E, N, N, N, N, W, N, HIT MACHINE, LOOK, TAKE MONEY, TAKE CHOCOLATE, S, W, PULL DRAWER, TAKE HAIRPIN, E, E, S, S, PICK LOCK, ROLL CARPET, TAKE DISK, E, N, N, W, W, INSERT DISK, E, E, S, S, S, S, DROP MONEY, DROP HAIRPIN, E, E, E, N, N, N, N, E, TIP VASE, LOOK, EXAMINE NOTE, DIAL 685743, LOOK, TAKE GUN, W, S, S, E, E, E, S, S, TAKE TUBE, S, S, W, W, N, INSERT TUBE, SUCK TUBE, S, E, E, N, KNOCK, MOVE PICTURE, TAKE KEY, E, N, N, N, N, TAKE WEIGHT, S, W, W, W, S, W, SHOOT PUSHER, E, S, S, W, W, W, DROP KEY, DROP FULL, W, W, N, SHOOT THUG, LOOK, EXAMINE LEG, BREAK LEG, LOOK, TAKE MAP, READ MAP, S, E, E, DROP MAP, TAKE MONEY, E, E, E, N, N, N, N, N, W, W, N, BUY MEAT, S, S, E, E, INSERT KEY, S, S, E, E, S, S, W, S, W, S, S, S, E, SHOUT, E, S, S, E, SAY OUT, S, E, E, N, E, N, E, E, S, S, E, S, E, E, S, S, W, DROP WEIGHT . . . THE END!

DANGER MOUSE

Thanks to Mark Derham for the following "Getting you started" on this program. Examine tree, climb tree, take skeleton key, go to clearing, go to the hut, take the hacksaw, enter the hut, take the garlic, go to the clearing, go to the hut, take the shovel, hide in the forest, clear some snow, pick up the rope, go to the clearing, go to the hut, take the axe, follow the track, follow the murky moat, enter the forest, shop some wood, take some logs, follow the tracks, go to the hut, take the bottle, follow the track, follow the murky moat, again, enter the forest, go down stream, cross the stepping stones . . . and the rest is up to you!

HE SORCERESS

Stuck in a dungeon or helpless at the hands of fetid trolls? Write to The Sorceress SU *Priory Ct, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.*

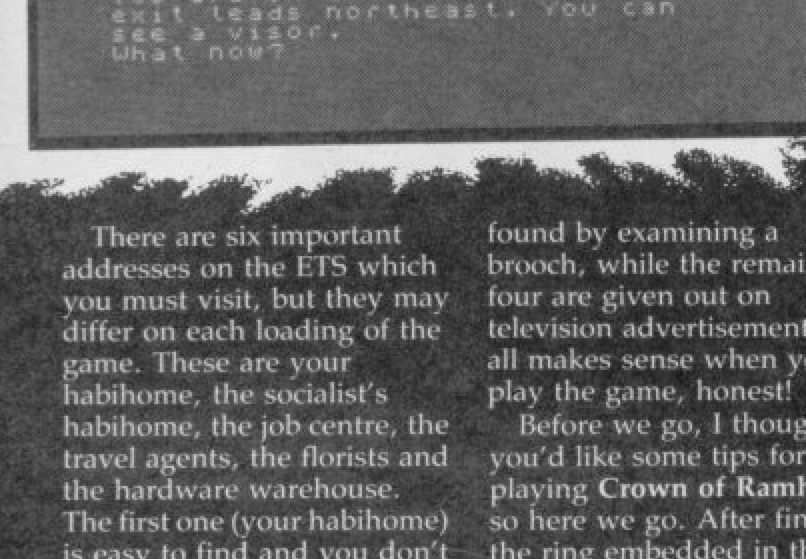


There are six important addresses on the ETS which you must visit, but they may differ on each loading of the game. These are your habihome, the socialist's habihome, the job centre, the travel agents, the florists and the hardware warehouse. The first one (your habihome) is easy to find and you don't need to remember the address – just type "SAY HOME" in open areas, other than exits from roundabouts leading to an ETS, and you are deposited one move north of your habihome, so south to enter. On leaving your habihome type "SAY EXIT" then south and you're placed somewhere on the northmost roundabout, depending on your home address.

The socialist's home is found by examining a brooch, while the remaining four are given out on television advertisements. It all makes sense when you play the game, honest!

Before we go, I thought you'd like some tips for playing **Crown of Ramhoter** so here we go. After finding the ring embedded in the stone slab: Pull the ring to reveal an opening, drop the spade and compass, down. You are now in the dark but being a competent adventurer you are sure to have brought your lamp with you, so light it. Go east and then south to a recess which contains three items, just get the bar and go north, east and south. At this point a stone slab drops behind you sealing you in . . . don't panic!! You are in a chamber containing a ladder and a statue. You need them both but you can only carry one at a time so take the statue first and go south to a room containing a figure of 'Isis' holding a staff. The staff looks interesting so try turning it, hey presto! an opening has appeared to the west. Go west, south, east and north and you will find yourself in an alcove with a hole in the floor, tie the rope to the bar and lower it down the hole. Go south, west, south, east . . . at this point you will hear a click as a trap is set. If you continue to the east without disarming the trap you will die, so go south into a handy alcove and drop the statue, the weight of the statue stops the trap being sprung. It is now safe to go back for the ladder. Get the ladder and go south back to the 'Isis' room, tie the rope to the ladder and go west, south, east and north, pull the rope, untie it and get the ladder, go south where you will find an oil lamp . . . now you're on your own.

As we are at the end of this month's column, I shall leave you with a little puzzle. Oh, all right then, an enormous puzzle. The final message at the end of **Snowball** reads as folows: "It turns. Engine roars! The Snowball turns away from the sun. YOU HAVE WON!" The puzzle is: how do you solve the game so that you can read the message on your own Spectrum screen? The answer is that your read Sinclair User next month! The Academy doors are closing . . .



WITTS END

THE KEEPER After you have untied the dog, go east, southwest and then dig repeatedly until you see a tunnel, if you've remembered to bring the rice you can give it to a man called Hood who takes the food and shares it between his men who just happen to be hidden amongst the trees. After eating the food they drop down and thank you and will follow you from now on. However, you will, sometimes have to wait repeatedly until they decide to go into action.

DOUBLE AGENT If you are having trouble finding the light in the room, feel around for a cord and then pull it. Searching the rubble will provide you with a hammer which you can use to smash the locked cupboard door open. If you can't find the remote control device for opening doors then try opening the safe with the key which you should have found when you turned the light on in the room. After smashing the cupboard you will find a book and turning the pages of the book will give you the colour codes for the different areas and also the computer access code name.

ENERGEM ENIGMA If you can't find the lantern then try examining the leaves. Similarly, if you can't find the key they try examining the tracks. In fact, it is a good idea to examine everything at the start of this game, and if you can't examine things then you can always dig in them. For example, digging in the sand will reveal a tin. Anyone who is having difficulty in crossing the river will have to reveal an unexpectedly athletic side to their nature by vaulting across uisng a pole. Hopefully, the Polish gentleman will not object.



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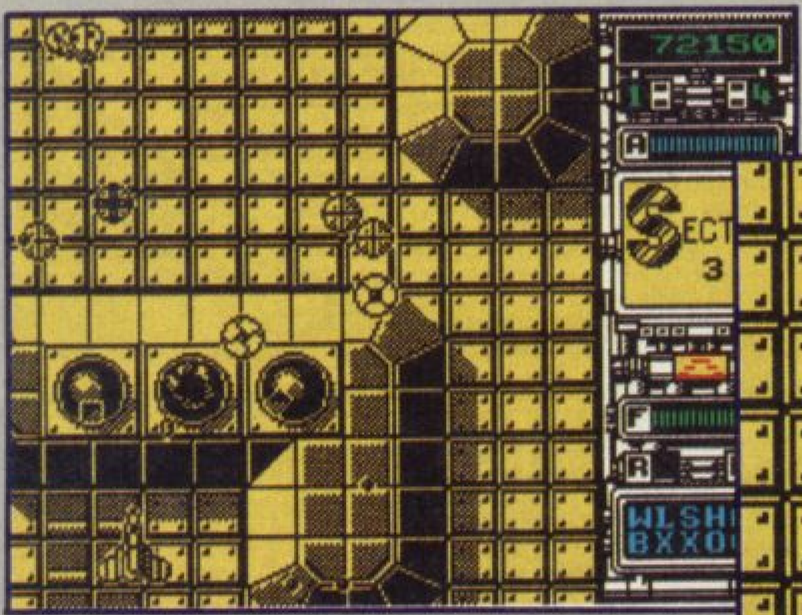
AAAAaaaargh! It's the end of the world! Oh no it's not – it's Blue Print. Easy mistake to make, see. A couple of colour pages explaining how programmers put together some of the most exciting games of the moment and the end of civilisation as we know it. Similar, y'see. (Oh, obviously – G.T.)

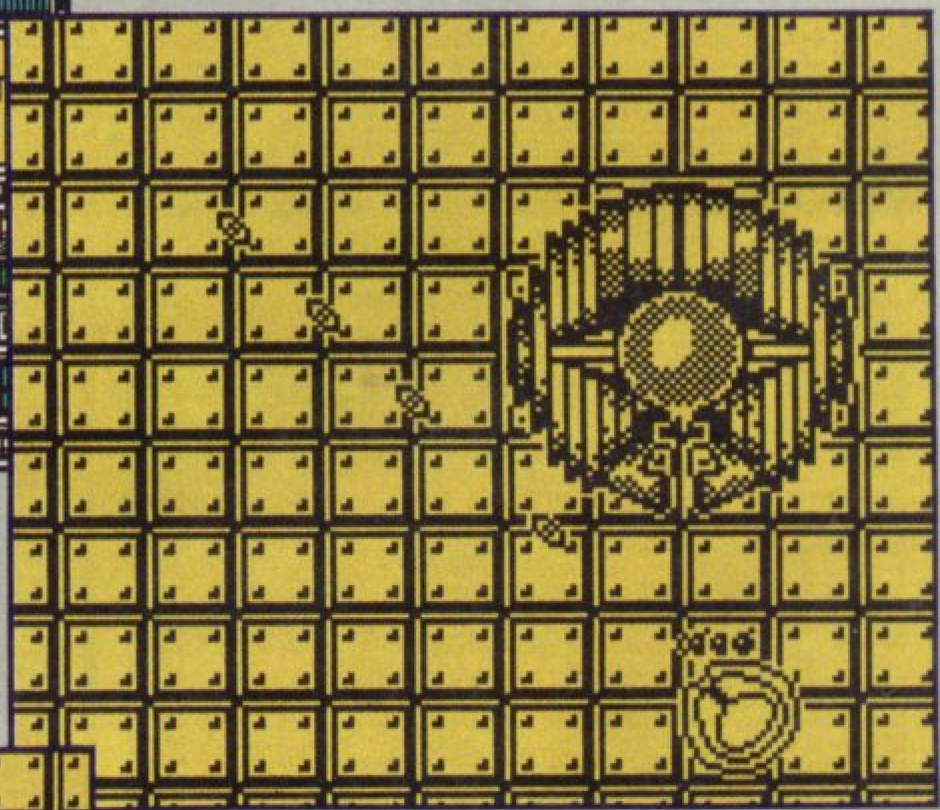
BLUE

XEN

THE ORIGINAL

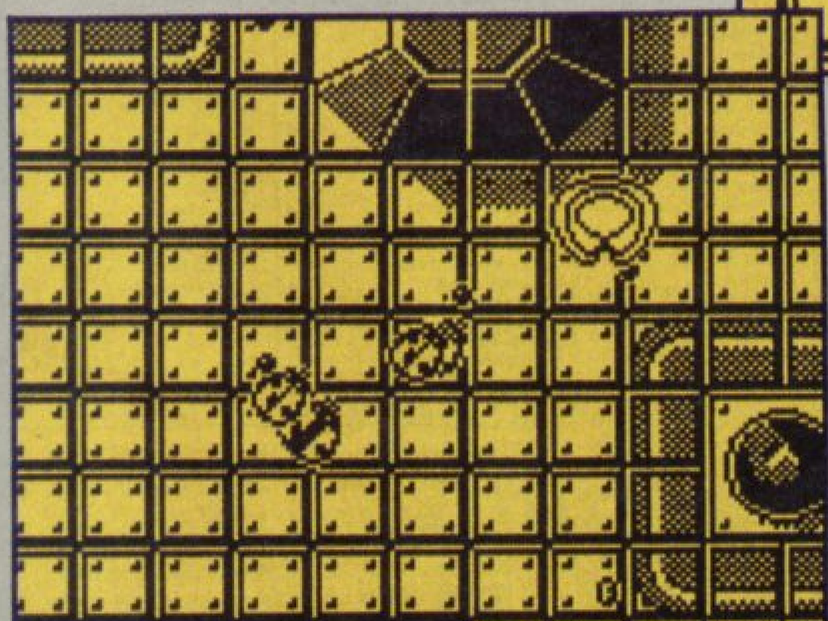
Xenon first appeared on the ST about a year ago and it's stood up as one of the best arcade style destructo-fests in the face of hordes of challengers. The graphics were super-smooth scrolling metallic alien complexes with screaming fighter pilots and gun implacements to blow up. It was the epitome of a great shoot-em-up.

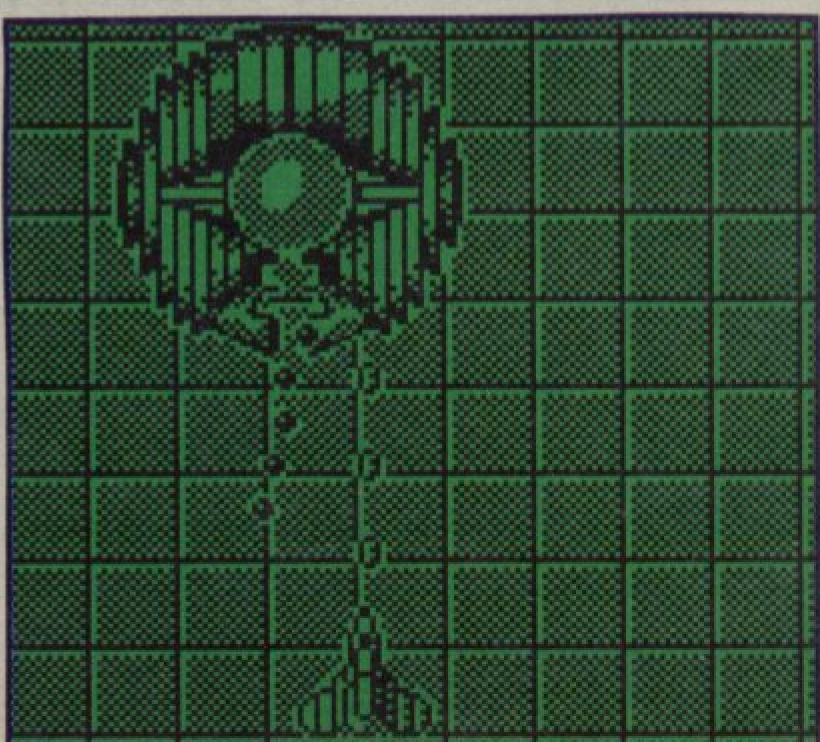




PROGRAMMERS

Lothlorien were hired to do the conversion to the Spectrum, and Jason Cowling in particular was responsible for much of the code, assisted in the final stages by Tiny Williams. Amazingly it's the first major project of the seventeen year old and it took six months.





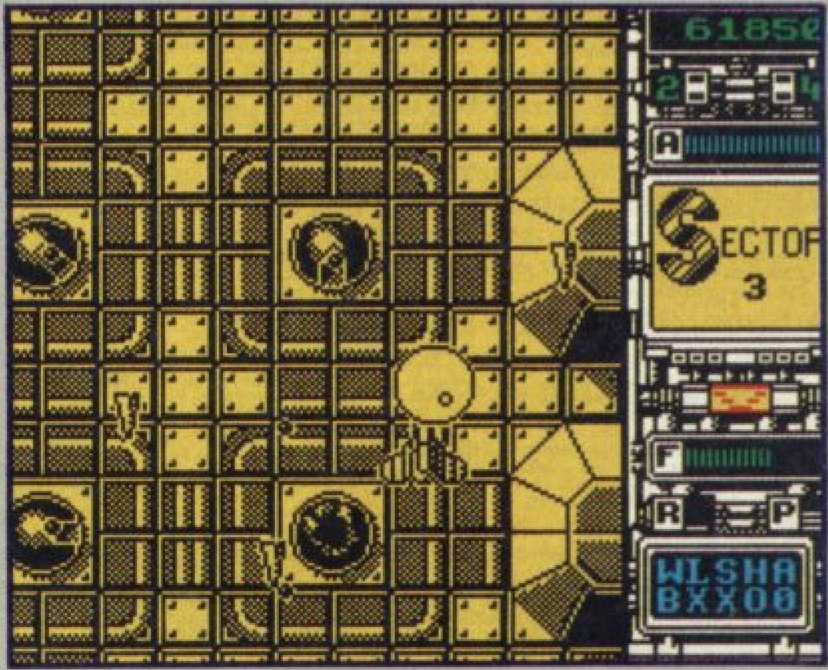
PRINT

ON

GRAPHICS

It was decided that the graphics would have to be monochrome because of sprites going over backgrounds. The main graphic problem was one of memory – the 16-bit versions obviously had lots of different sprites, all with plenty of animation, and some, including the tank, faced in eight different directions. The tank, on its own including masks would have taken 6k to store. So we store these in three directions only; up, left and diagonal up and left.

When it comes to printing, a table tells us which definition to use and whether to reverse it in the x plane, the y plane or both the x and y plane.

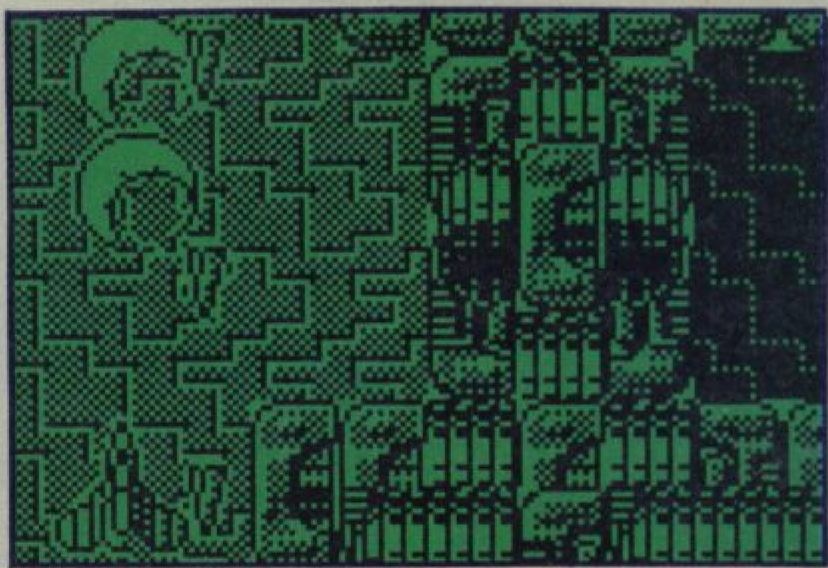


SOUND

The music converted from David Whittaker's ST version and is an almost exact reproduction as Dave was kind enough to supply the ST data. (It has to be said that the sound on the Spec version is brilliant. There's continuous music and great sound effects – J.D.).

PROBLEMS

The biggest problem the programmers faced was the size of the game. Pure and simple, it was just too big to fit in either 128K or 48K. As a result, there are four loads. There's level one which loads at the same time as the controls and housekeeping program, and the following three levels load subsequently.

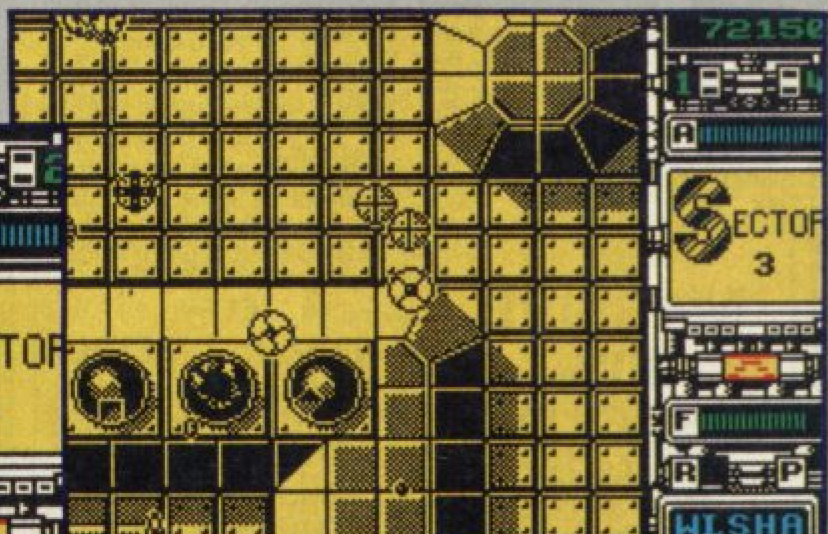


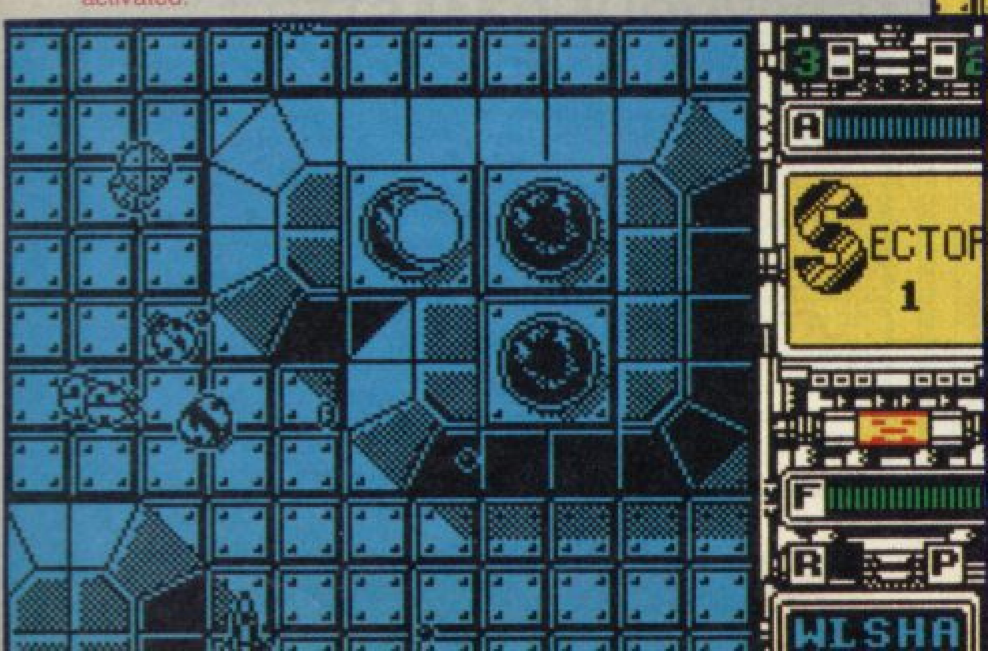
SPEED

Playability had to take priority over speed. We copied most of the movement patterns from the ST version. Even the ST game slows down now and again. Everything had to be optimised several times and the balance between speed and detail is always very much a matter of feel.

CONTROLS

The standard joystick options are available, along with a key define option. Unfortunately, we couldn't get the joystick-waggle feature quite right to cause ship-change, so you have to use one of the keys for that. There wasn't enough room to include a two player option or weapon selection routines, so as soon as you collect a weapon, it will be activated.





I'VE GOT THIS PROBLEM

Gizmo gone bonkers? Can't get your thingy connected? Don't be afraid to tell us . . .

. . . PURCHASING A MODEM

I'm thinking about purchasing a modem but I'm unsure what's legal and what's illegal. Can I enter a company's system without being prosecuted?

Do I need software to operate a modem?

D Smith
Salt Ash
Cornwall

● Firstly, it's illegal to connect any modem without a green triangle approval sticker to the BT network. The 'classic' Spectrum modem – the VTX 5000 – is approved. It's not illegal to connect to systems over the telephone where you don't have specific approval, although doing much more than this can attract the attention of the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary faster than driving a Land Rover to Botus Cleming with no lights at midnight.

Most modems need software, but (again) the VTX 5000 comes with programs built in to ROM. For more information on using the Spectrum with modems and suchlike, the best place to go is Microlink on 01-278 3143.

Next pilau rice . . .

. . . WITH MY PRINTER

I recently got a Spectrum +3 and I'm having problems with my printer. I have a Citizen 120-D with a parallel cartridge that takes a Centronics Plus.

I can't get LPRINT or LLIST to work – the worked fine with my Spectrum + and Kempston E interface. I've got the lead mentioned in the +3 manual, but nothing. I bought Tasword +3 and Tasprint +3, but these don't work either.

Is my computer port at fault, or should I try and get a serial printer cartridge for the printer? Are the Spectrum and the Citizen 120-D not compatible?

J Pyle
Westwood Estate
Peterborough

● Open and shut case here. It's either the printer cable (unlikely) or the Spectrum that's at fault. The only thing to watch out for is that the printer port only works with the Spectrum in 128K mode, but since Tasword +3 works in that mode anyway it's some sort of hardware problem.

I suspect the computer (the butler was in the library). If you bought the Spectrum from a local store, try taking it back with the printer. If the shop's any good, they'll let you try another computer with the printer, and you can make sure everything works before you leave.

Next steaming face towel . . .

. . . WITH MY JOYSTICK

My new +3 is causing some grief. 1 – the Autofire on my Cheetah Plus joystick doesn't function, although it does when connected to a Kempston Interface 2. 2 – I can't save programs to tape, although the lead (bought from Romantic Robot) works fine for loading. 3 – My Multiface 3 lets me delete files from disk, but I can't do this normally – why? 4 – When I do a 'CAT' from a shop-bought games disk. I get 165K free. How?

Chris Spear
Bridge Road
Hounslow

● Only four questions? Sure you don't want me to come round and fix the dishwasher as well? 1 – Autofire circuits inside joysticks need to get their power from the joystick port. Amstrad ports don't have the power – Kempston ones do. 2 – Sounds like a bad +3 – there were quite a few made with save-to-tape problems. Take it back and make sure that you get one that works in return. 3 – +3DOS does allow you to delete files, but Multiface 3 can reveal and delete hidden programs and data. I think that this is what's happening. 4 – Bright bods like Ocean have their own way of storing programs on disk, to, ah, dissuade copiers. This confuses the +3's normal system into returning a silly amount of free space, but any attempt to use it from BASIC will destroy the game. Next murgh tikka . . .

. . . WITH SOFTWARE

I've just heard of Locomotive Software's Mallard BASIC and CP/M for the +3 – does this mean that the Spectrum could run Locoscript or other software?

The +3 we bought last Christmas is lacking in the games department. It's disappointing how many games aren't available on disk, but someone has suggested that there's an interface for the computer that copies tapes to disk. What is this, and if we buy a cassette recorder do we get any more than if we'd just bought a +2 in the first place?

Janis Haerie (Mrs)
Nr Baldock
Herts

● The +3 will indeed run other programs with CP/M – but not Locomotive's Locoscript. which is not a CP/M program.

The interface to copy tape software to disk is called the Multiface 3 – it's a reliable way to buy games cheaply on cassette and build up a disk library.

. . . NOW THE SELLOTAPE'S STOPPED WORKING

I've got a Spectrum + which is two and a half years old. Since about six months ago, I've had to push down hard on the cassette lead to load games because the ear socket is loose. The black part of the cassette lead refused to work altogether. The aerial socket is also loose, and I used to have to sellotape the lead to the case. But now that's stopped working too.

How can I fix this, and where can I get the bits?

Shane Griffin
Youghal
Co Cork

● I fixed my loose-socketed Speccy by getting inside the case, unsoldering the ear and mic sockets and soldering in two short leads instead. I used standard shielded audio cable, cut to thirty centimetre lengths. Then, to the end of the cables, I connected two good quality flying 3.5mm mono jack sockets. They don't cost much more than the cheap ones, and last ten times longer. Together with a new cassette lead, this fix is much more reliable than the original arrangement as there is no strain put on the plug/socket interface.

The TV thing is a bit more difficult, but while you've got the back off the computer you should be able to see why the socket is loose. Usually it's not the socket itself that's wrong, but the modulator to which it's attached coming away from the main board. Redoing the solder joints should fix this.

. . . WITH LOADING GAMES

Dear Dr Dupe (do I have to put up with this sort of thing? RG). (Yes. Ed)

I have a Spectrum +2 and I get bored waiting for all my great games to load. I heard something about an upgrade to a +3. Is it possible?

And if so, where could I get it done and how much would it cost?

Kelvin Jamieson
Prestwick
Ayrshire

● Dear Kev, oh dear, sorry, Kelv. It is not possible to upgrade a +2 to a +3. It is possible that, sometime in the indefinite future, Amstrad will produce a cheap tape-based Spectrum that could be upgraded to a +3, but then again it's possible that they won't. In any case, the circuit differences are such that existing +2 owners will be stuck.

This month we look at interfaces and Damian Scattergood gives advice on using the Spectrum ports to their best advantage.

HOW

Steve Marsden originally worked for Hewson in 1984, where he produced **Technician Ted.** He then moved to BT, where he produced **Costa Capers** in mid 1985. **City Slicker** came next in 1986 for Hewson.

In early 1987 Steve moved to Gremlin Graphics and produced **Final Matrix,** the 1987 Christmas compendium. April 1988 saw the release of **Blood Brothers** for Gremlin. More recently, Steve finished **4x4 Off-Road Racing** for US Gold.

During the four years of programming, Steve has worked with Dave Cooke. Before he started programming, he made silicon chips. Steve Marsden is a pilot.

DOES SPRITE DETECTION WORK?

In a program such as a game or a utility with a moving pointer driven by a mouse/tracker ball, there will be some form of detection routine if the moving objects interact in some way. If the detection routine is a good one, then the results on the screen will be visually more pleasing. We've all played games where you are frantically trying to move your main character away from a hostile alien, only to be killed off by another which looks to be a good two inches from the main character.

It can be extremely difficult to come up with an algorithm which doesn't take up hours of execution time and still leave an acceptable collision detection system. At the end of the day therefore it is all down to how much – or how little – time the programmer can allow for the detection routine. At the end of this article, I have written a small routine which gives the ulitmate in detection – pixel detection. Like your computer teachers always say – "A computer can do anything you program it to do!" This is also the case when designing detection routines. Most programmers go for the first method I will describe – Box detection.

Virtually every sprite that has ever been drawn, starts out life as a rectagular array of bytes. The array of bytes is then transformed into a super dooper spacecraft or other graphic with a suitable editing package and the resulting data is called a sprite frame. To move this sprite around the screen, the animation routine will simply output the rectagular array to various positions on the screen map. Now unless we draw a rectangular box shape which perfectly lines up with the edges of the array of bytes making up the sprite, then the odd corner of the array will consist of fresh air or nothingness (Fig. 1).

However, we don't actually set up a rectangular array of say 10 characters by 10 characters in size and only draw a 2 x 2 character shape. Moreover we select a suitable size of rectangle so that we more or less fill the rectangle with only a few bare corners showing. This factor allows us to use a mathematical form of detection known as box detection.

Normally, a sprite will have a few important variables associated with it. These are at the very least an X co-ordinate, Y co-ordinate and possibly variables telling us how wide the sprite is and also how deep it is. Now it is quite an easy matter from this information about a sprite to determine whether an overlap has occurred between two sprite rectangles with a little elementary maths.

If all our sprites were boxes or rectangles, then this method would be infallible The truth is, however, that our sprites have corners missing as in Fig. 1. Suppose two sprites are overlapping by their corners, the routine above will sense that they are overlapping – but on the screen we would not see an overlap in the pixel meeting pixel sense. To us, it would seem that the two sprites were miles apart but they still detected each other. What is required then is a routine which actually determines pixel to pixel collisions.

The Hewson game **Technician Ted** used pixel detection and made it possible to use the feature extensively in its gameplay. The main character could literally walk up to a hostile sprite until his nose was only one pixel away from death. This sounds quite a complicated feat on the surface, but in reality it is so easy – the logical instruction 'AND' does it all for you.

Just think about it at the lowest level. A sprite is data and the screen is also data – just numbers. To draw a sprite onto a screen really means that we are taking one byte of data from one place and mixing it with another byte of data in another place and then storing the new data byte in the screen memory. Remember the truth table for the logical AND instruction:

A	B	C
0	0	0
0	1	0
1	0	0
1	1	1

Column A is one bit of data while column B is another bit of data. If we assume that a pixel is a '1' or a set bit in a byte then an overlap in logic terms means the case when A = B = 1. The column C in this case produces a '1' when both A and B are '1'.

This shows clearly how we can use the AND to create a pixel detection system. The example program below uses an AND instruction in the detection routine but it does seem to be buried under a lot of other instructions – this is because a few other considerations have sometimes to be applied such as outputting the sprite to the screen. For the more technically minded out there, I have used an XOR type of output routine which combines the pixel detection as well.

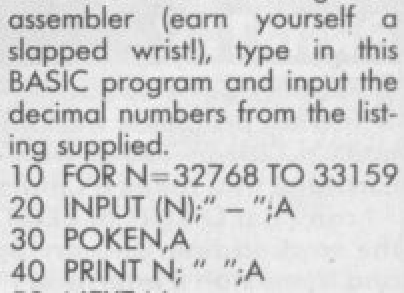
A pixel detection system does not give any other information apart from telling us that an overlap has occurred. For example, a collision might occur between two sprites and a background feature such as a wall. The sprite to sprite collision might be acceptable – a friendly character perhaps – but the pixel detection cannot differentiate between pixels. A pixel could belong to a wall, a frog, a power pill, but the routine does not know where it originated from. This is why pixel detection can grow to very complicated lengths and as such it is why programmers usually shy away from it.

Preferably type in the source code into an assembler and produce the program that way. For those who haven't got an assembler (earn yourself a slapped wrist!), type in this BASIC program and input the decimal numbers from the listing supplied.

```
10 FOR N=32768 TO 33159
20 INPUT (N);" – ";A
30 POKEN,A
40 PRINT N; " ";A
50 NEXT N
```

To run the program, do a RANDOMIZE USR 32768 and just watch what happens – hopefully a starry background with 6 square shapes moving around it. To return to BASIC press the SPACE bar. Poke the addresses 32792 and 32824 with any number from 1 to 6 to determine how many of the square shapes you want.

Once the program has been entered, to save the machine code type in SAVE "detect" CODE 32678,391.



Sinclair User's address
Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane
London EC1

THE HELL!!!

PIXEL COLLISION DETECTION DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM
By Steve Marsden © November 1988

```
                ORG £8000
NO_SHAPES:      EQU 6
DETECT_DEMO:
        LD A,1                  ;set the border to blue
        OUT (£FE),A
        LD HL,£4000             ;clear the pixel screen
        LD DE,£4001
        LD BC,£17FF
        LD (HL),L
        LDIR
        CALL DRAW_STARS         ;draw in the background and borders
        LD IX,BLOB_VARS         ;set up IX to point to the first set
        LD B,NO_BLOBS           ;of shape variables and made B equal
                                ;to the number of shapes we want
INIT_LOOP:
        PUSH BC                 ;preserve B – the counter
        LD D, (IX+1)            ;set up DE with the X and Y coords
        LD E,(IX+0)             ;of the shape
        CALL DRAW_BLOB          ;draw it to the screen
        LD C,4
        ADD IX,BC               ;make IX point to the next shape
        POP BC                  ;restore B
        DJNZ INIT_LOOP          ;loop back to draw in the rest of
                                ;the shapes
MAIN_LOOP                       ;synchronise the output loop with a
        LD BC,1900              ;HALT and set up BC for the flicker
DELAY:  DEC BC                  ;reducing counter
        BIT 7,B                 ;if BC has not gone negative then go
        JR Z,DELAY              ;back (1901 times)
        LD IX,BLOB_VARS         ;initialise IX to the shape variable
        LD B,NO_BLOBS           ;list and B as a counter to the
BLOB_LOOP:                      ;number of shapes required
        PUSH BC                 ;save the counter
        CALL OUTPUT_BLOB        ;CALL the main shape output and test
                                ;routine
        CALL NC,CHANGE_DIR      ;NO CARRY from OUTPUT_BLOB
                                ;means that collision has occurred so we
                                ;CALL CHANGE_DIR to make the shape
        LD BC,4                 ;rebound
        ADD IX,BC               ;move IX on to the next set of shape
        POP BC                  ;variables and restore B
        DJNZ BLOB_LOOP          ;loop back as required
        LD A,£7F                ;set A to the keyboard half row
        IN A,(£FE)              ;B-SPACE and read it
        RRA                     ;check Bit 0 (SPACE)
        JR C,MAIN_LOOP          ;jump back if not pressed
        RET                     ;else return to BASIC
CHANGE_DIR:
        CALL DIR10              ;CALL DIR10 to get a random value of
        LD (IX+2),A             ;0,1,–1 into the accumulator. Store
        LD C,A                  ;it in the X movement variable
                                ;(IX+2) and also temporarily in C
        CALL DIR10              ;do the same for the Y movement
        OR C                    ;variable and then OR it with C
                                ;if the X and Y movement variables
        JR Z,CHANGE_DIR         ;are both zero then the shape would
                                ;not move so jump back to CHANGE_DIR
        RET                     ;then return
DIR10:  CALL RAND_NUM           ;get an 8 bit random number
        CP 96
        JR NC,DIR20             ;jump if A>96
        LD A,–1                 ;if A is 0 – 95, then make A = –1
        RET
DIR20:  CP 160
        JR C,DIR30              ;jump if A<160
        LD A,1                  ;if A>160 then make A = 1
        RET
DIR30:  XOR A                   ;if 96<=A<160 then make A=0
        RET
DRAW_STARS:
        LD BC,£FFBF             ;make BC = counter values
        LD DE,0                 ;DE = screen top left coordinates
ST10:   CALL PLOT               ;plot at DE
        INC E                   ;stop along a pixel
        DJNZ ST10               ;and repeat for 255 times
        LD B,C                  ;,ale B = 191
ST20:   CALL PLOT               ;plot at top right corner
        INC D                   ;and step down the screen 191 times
        DJNZ ST20
        DEC B                   ;decrement B to make it = 255
ST30:   CALL PLOT               ;plot at bottom right corner
        DEC D                   ;step from right to left
        DJNZ ST30               ;for 255 times
        LD B,C                  ;make B = 191
ST40    CALL PLOT               ;plot at bottom left corner
        DEC D                   ;and step up the left edge of the
        DJNZ ST40               ;screen for 191 times
        inc b                   ;make BC = 447
ST50:   PUSH BC                 ;save it
        CALL Y_RAND_NUM         ;get random number from 0 - 191
        LD D,A                  ;put it in D
        CALL RAND_NUM           ;now get one from 0 – 255
        LD E,A                  ;and put it in E
        CALL PLOT_ADDR          ;now plot at this random coordinate
        OR (HL)                 ;by OR'ing with the screen
        LD (HL),A               ;pointed at by HL
        POP BC                  ;restore the counter
        DEC BC                  ;decrement it and loop back for 448
        BIT 7,B                 ;times (until BC goes negative)
        JR Z,ST50
        RET
OUTPUT_BLOB:
        LD D,(IX+1)             ;set up DE from the shape coordinate
        LD E,(IX+0)             ;variables
        CALL DRAW_BLOB          ;rub out the blob from its present
                                ;position
        LD A, (IX+2)            ;now add in the X movement variable
        ADD A,E                 ;to the X coordinate and put in E
        LD E,A
        LD A, (IX+3)            ;do the same with the Y movement
        ADD A,D                 ;variable but put it in D
        LD D,A
        CALL DRAW_BLOB          ;draw in the shape at the new moved
                                ;position
        JR C,PUT_BACK           ;if there was a CARRY, then the new
                                ;position has hit a pixel so jump
                                ;to PUT_BACK and don't move
        LD (IX+1),D             ;if the new position was OK then
        LD (IX +0),E            ;store the new X and Y coordinates
        SCF                     ;and set the CARRY before returning
        RET                     ;to signal – MOVE SUCCESSFUL
PUT_BACK
        CALL DRAW_BLOB          ;rub out the moved shape
        LD D, (IY+1)
        LD,E(IX+0)              ;Y position
        CALL DRAW_BLOB          ;and re-draw the shape at its first
        AND A                   ;position, CLEAR the carry flag
        RET                     ;before returning to signal – MOVE
                                ;UNSUCCESSFUL
DRAW_BLOB:
        PUSH DE                 ;save DE
        CALL PLOT_ADDR          ;calculate the screen address at
                                ;which to draw the shape (from DE)
        LD DE,SHAPE             ;make DE point to the shape data
        EX AF,AF'               ;clear the alternative carry flag
        AND A
        EX AF,AF'
        LD B,8                  ;there are 8 pixels rows in the shape
BLOB10: push bc                 ;save the counter
        PUSH DE                 ; ... and the shape pointer
        LD B,C                  ;B = C = X pixel position (1 – 8)
        LD A, (DE)              ;get the shape data byte
        LD D,A                  ;put it in DE (E = 0)
        LD E,0
BLOB20: SRL D                   ;rotate DE as required to bring the
                                ;shape date into the correct place
        DJNZ BLOB20             ;for outputting to the screen
                                ;The detection and output stage
        LD A,D                  ;get the leftmost byte of data and
        LD(HL)                  ;logically XOR it with the screen
        LD (HL),A               ;data then store it in the screen
        AND D                   ;mask off the bits we have just put
        CP D                    ;in and check to see that they are
                                ;the same – Zero flag set
        JR Z,BLOB30             ;jump if the same – no collision
        EX AF,AF'               ;set the alternative carry flag to
        SCF                     ;indicate that a collision has in
        EX AF,AF'               ;fact occurred
BLOB30: INC HL                  ;step on the screen pointer across
        LD A,E                  ;the screen and now treat the right
        XOR (HL)                ;most byte of shape data in the same
        LD (HL),A               ;way – XORing to the screen, masking
        AND E                   ;the bits we are interested in and
        CP E                    ;comparing to check that they are
        JR Z,BLOB40             ;the same – jumping if they are
        EX AF,AF'               ;as before, set the alternative
        SCF                     ;carry flag if a collision has
        EX AF,AF'               ;occurred
BLOB40: DEC HL                  ;step the screen pointer back to its
        INC H                   ;first place and increment it down
        LD A,H                  ;the screen
        AND 7                   ;if within the same character cell
        JR NZ, BLOB50           ;then jump
        LD A,L                  ;else add 32 to the low byte of the
        ADD A,£20               ;screen pointer
        LD L,A
        JR C,BLOB50             ;if transition across a screen
                                ;'third' has been made then jump
        LD A,H                  ;else subtract 8 off the pointer
        SUB 8                   ;high byte
        LD H,A
BLOB50: POP DE                  ;restore the shape pointer
        POP BC                  ;and the 8 pixel row counter
        INC DE                  ;increment the shape pointer
        DJNZ BLOB10             ;and decrement the counter
        EX AF,AF'               ;make the alternative carry flag
        POP DE                  ;available to the CALLing routine
        RET                     ;restore DE and return
PLOT:
        PUSH BC                 ;save registers from corruption
        PUSH DE
        CALL PLOT_ADDR          ;calculate the screen plot address
        OR (HL)                 ;and OR in the pixel to
        LD (HL),A               ;the screen
        POP DE
        POP BC                  ;restore registers and return
        RET
PLOT_ADDR:
        LD A,D                  ;check the Y coordinate range to see
        CP 192                  ;that it is not off the screen
        RET NC                  ;return if it is
        AND £C0                 ;put the screen 'third' bits into
        RRA                     ;bits 3 and 4 with a 010 in bit
        SCF                     ;positions 5, 6 and 7
        RRA
        RRA
        XOR D                   ;merge in the bits 0, 1 and 2 from
        AND £F8                 ;the Y coordinate
        XOR D
        LD H,A                  ;and store in H
        LD A,E                  ;move the top 5 bits of the X co-
        RLCA                    ;ordinate into bits 0, 1, 2 and 6, 7
        RLCA
        RLCA
        XOR D                   ;merge in bits 3, 4 and 5 from the
        AND £C7                 ;Y coordinate
        XOR D
        RLCA                    ;rotate the byte twice more and
        RLCA                    ;hey presto we have
        LD L,A                  ;the low byte of the screen address
        LD A,E                  ;get the three lower bits of the X
        AND 7                   ;coordinate and increment them to
        INC A                   ;give the range 1 - 8
        LD B,A                  ;copy it to B and C
        LD C,A
        LD A,1                  ;set bit 0 of A
PLOT 10: RRCA                   ;rotate it so that the set bit is
        DJNZ PLOT10             ;in the correct place before
        RET                     ;returning
Y_RAND:
        CALL RAND_NUM           ;get an 8 bit random number and
        CP 192                  ;check to see that it is less than
        JR NC,Y_RAND_NUM        ;192. Jump back it it isn't until
        RET                     ;we get a valid number less than 192
RAND_NUM:
        LD HL,(SEED_POINTER)    ;the random number is obtained by
        INC HL                  ;poking the Spectrum ROM from £0000
        LD A,H                  ;to £4000
        AND £3F                 ;the pointer to the ROM address is
        LD H,A                  ;incremented each time we call the
        LD (SEED_POINTER) HL    ;random number routine and the
        LD A,(HL)               ;accumulator is loaded with the
        RET                     ;current pointer value before
                                ;returning

                                ;this is the 8 bytes of shape data
SHAPE:          BYTE £FF,£81,£81,£9F,£80,£81,£81,£EFF
                                ;the random number pointer
SEED_POINTER:
        WORD 2000
                                ;initial values for the 6 shape
                                ;variables
BLOB_VARS:      WORD £3010,£EFF01
                WORD £0950,£00FF
                WORD £0960,£0101
                WORD £9F70,£FF00
                WORD £9F80,£00FF
                WORD £7F10,£00FF
```

4 BYTES WIDE

24 BYTES

HIGH

This size of sprite array would commonly be referred to as a 'Four by Three'

FIG 1 – A 'FOUR BY THREE' ABSTRACT SHAPED SPRITE

PIXEL DETECTION ROUTINE DECIMAL LISTING

```
 62   1 211 254  33   0  64  17   1  64   1 255  23 117 237 176
205 116 128 221  33 111 129   6   6 197 221  86   1 221  94   0
205 217 128  14   4 221   9 193  16 239 118   1 108   7  11 203
120  40 251 221  33 111 129   6   6 197 205 171 128 212  80 128
  1   4   0 221   9 193  16 241  62 127 219 254  31  56 219 201
205  97 128 221 119   2  79 205  97 128 221 119   3 177  40 240
201 205  88 129 254  96  48   3  62 255 201 254 160  56   3  62
  1 201 175 201   1 191 255  17   0   0 205  32 129  28  16 250
 65 205  32 129  20  16 250   5 250  32 129  29  16 250  65 205
 32 129  21  16 250   4 197 205  80 129  87 205  88 129  95 205
 42 129 182 119 193  11 203 120  40 236 201 221  86   1 221  94
  0 205 217 128 221 126   2 131  95 221 126   3 130  87 205 217
128  56   8 221 114   1 221 115   0  55 201 205 217 128 221  86
  1 221  94   0 205 217 128 167 201 213 205  42 129  17 101 129
  8 167   8   6   8 197 213  65  26  87  30   0 203  58 203  27
 16 250 122 174 119 162 186  40   3   8  55   8  35 123 174 119
163 187  40   3   8  55   8  43  36 124 230   7  32  10 125 198
 32 111  56   4 124 214   8 103 209 193  19  16 200   8 209 201
197 213 205  42 129 182 119 209 193 201 122 254 192 208 230 192
 31  55  31  31 170 230 248 170 103 123   7   7   7 170 230 199
170   7   7 111 123 230   7  60  71  79  62   1  15  16 253 201
205  88 129 254 197  48 249 201  42 109 129  35 124 230  63 103
 34 109 129 126 201 255 129 129 159 128 129 129 255 208   7  16
 48   1 255  80   9 255   0  96   9   1   1 112 159   0 255 128
159 255   0  16 127 255   0
```

TWILIGHT

DEADENDERS

ADVENTURE Label: **Top Ten** Author: **Carol Sharp** Price: **£1.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **none** Reviewer: **Chris Jenkins**

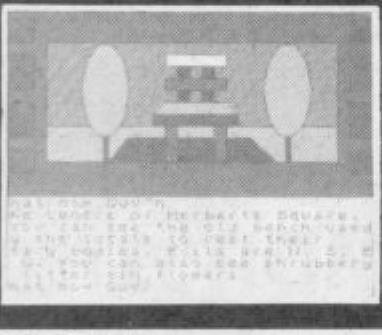
Cheesy, Quilled Eastenders adventure spoof with a few good jokes

I suppose someone had to do it; after the epoch-making failure of Macsen's Eastenders arcade game, some dummy had to come up with the idea of a spoof adventure. All the characters are here: Pete and Kaff, Arfur Foulup, Meechelle, Loopy, and Dirty Dan. The mystery surrounds the disappearance of Effi's little Willie (yes, that's about the level of the humour).

As PC Donald Dance, you must investigate Herbert Square, questioning the residents and trying to avoid hazards such as Smelli's hot dogs.

Graphics are primitive but pleasantly colourful and quickly-drawn. Text entry is pretty limited; more often than not, whatever you type in simply brings the reply, "You can't do that guv." The 'guv' gets pretty tiresome after about, ooh, eleven seconds.

Apart from the odd grammatical bog-up, the game plays fairly smoothly, but you can't actually say that it's funny, as such. If the very idea of an Eastenders spoof makes you fall over laughing, then you might get some fun out of it, but Deadenders doesn't have much to offer adventurers of normal intelligence■



59%

REBEL

ARCADE Label: **Mastertronic** Author: **Gang of Five** Price: **£1.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **Various** Reviewer: **Steve Mahoney**

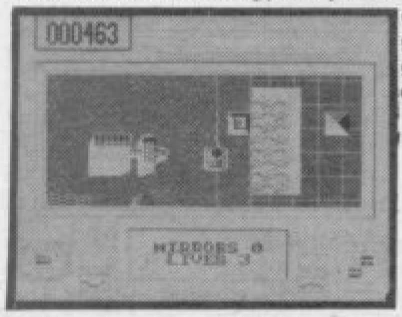
Buy it, play it, play it again etc

Rebel, originally released by Virgin is a tank game with a difference; you don't shoot anything. The idea is to find and place four mirrors in the right places (of which there are only a limited number, so it's not over-difficult) so that you can concentrate the baddies' giant laser onto a sealed exit tunnel to blast your way to freedom, or at least the next level. This game has BEAUTIFUL graphics and is very smooth to control. The enemies, although not varying much, are quite hard to predict, as some seem to just follow a set pattern of movement, while others go all over the gaff.

For £1.99, this game is very good value, it isn't very proficient in the sound department, but considering the strategical and arcade elements used, sound isn't very important.

If, however, you're one of those people who can't really play games which involve you 'Using ya nut' you won't find this to be much fun. All in all, I think that this should be a success for Mastertronic because it requires a lot of strategy and planning to produce success and when you do succeed, there are more pretty graphics as you see the laser ray going towards its destination, and destroying it.

Good game, buy it!■



85%

LEADERBOARD

SIMULATION Label: **Kixx** Author: **US Gold** Price: **£2.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **Various** Reviewer: **Chris Jenkins**

The best simulation on the market, well worth a look even if you don't like golf

I always thought that there could be nothing more boring than a golf simulation (unless it's a cricket simulation), but Leaderboard changed my mind. This budget re-release should alter your attitude to the sport of . . . er, golf players.

The 3D perspective graphics are spectacularly good, and appear surprisingly fast for the Spectrum. OK, colours are limited to green grass and blue water, but what more do you need? There's a considerable amount of skill involved in choosing the correct club, timing your swing with one eye on the power meter, and allowing for the crosswind. The animation of the flying ball is really smooth, and overall the sense of realism is intense.

Up to four players can compete, and there are three available skill levels. You can play from 18 to 72 holes, and once your get onto the green you get a different display for the final putt to the hole.

The computer keeps score and takes account of such disasters as balls falling in the water (oo-er). In fact, the only disappointment about the game is the lack of a computer opponent. Still, an ideal multi-player game which will get under your skin■



93%

DEATH STALKER

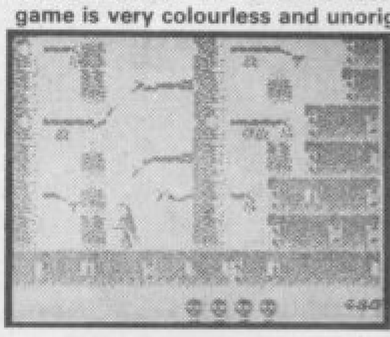
ARCADE Label: **Code Masters** Author: **Tony Warriner** Price: **£1.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **Various** Reviewer: **Steve Mahoney**

Well, er, it's just not thingy y'know?

'Sword fighting, magic potions . . . loads of weapons, hidden doors and passageways . . . huge firepits – it's all REALLY EXCELLENT!'

This is the quote on the back of this game. It's hardly surprising, since the contributor considers the game to be so good, that it was written by David Darling. Why do they bother letting one of Codemasters' heads write the blurb, it's hardly an unbiased opinion is it? In fact, Death Stalker is a semi-reasonable very Karnov-ish looking game, which involves using spells, weapons and stuff, but not in a very compelling or exciting way. David Whittaker has done the 128K soundtrack, which isn't bad, but the game is very colourless and unoriginal.

Graphics are nice in a 'boring-seenitallbeforehohumyawnsnore' sort of way and without colour it's hard to distinguish characters or work out just what is going on. In short, not good (and you don't get much shorter than that)■



65%

FLIGHT ACE

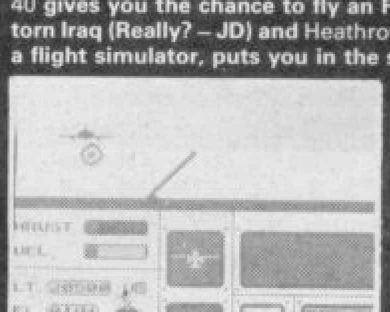
ARCADE Label: **Star Games** Author: **Various** Price: **£9.95** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **Various** Reviewer: **Tony Dillon**

Pretty good summary of the genre. Six games, some good, some seriously phwurr

Flight Ace is the third in the series of Ace collections, following directly on from Space Ace and Karate Ace, and boasts a respectable collection of the more outstanding flight simulators so far.

Top of the bill is Tomahawk. Pilot your AH-64 Apache through a barren landscape, with only a small outcrop of trees or a mini range of mountains here and there to guide you. The brilliant, though not a simulator as such, ATF makes its compilation debut, and of course, what collection of flight simulators would be complete without, ACE? Spitfire 40 gives you the chance to fly an F-114/A Stealth Bomber through war torn Iraq (Really? – JD) and Heathrow Traffic Control, though not actually a flight simulator, puts you in the seat of one of those funny little men who sit in front of a screen watching a line go round and round going 'blip-blip' all the time.

An ace collection with an ace title and Ace is on it. If you like flight sims, you'll love this■



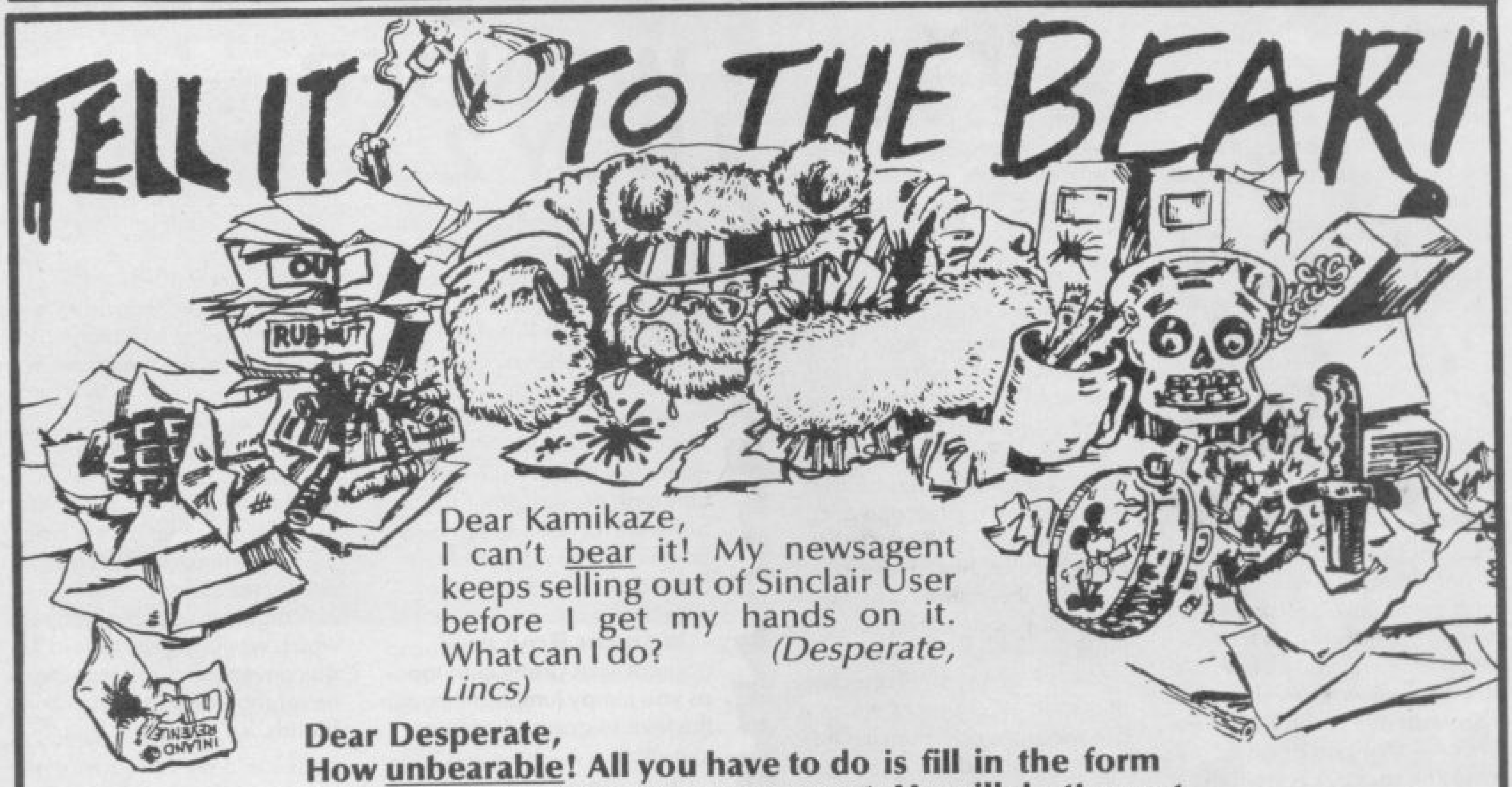
83%

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....

....

This month, what happened in Chicago (two player **Power Drift** that's what!); the game that you can't see the film of unless you're over the hill; Cute makes a comeback; and the perfect leisure activity for the house with serious subsidence. Read on for the crucial facts . . .

COIN

ROBOCOP

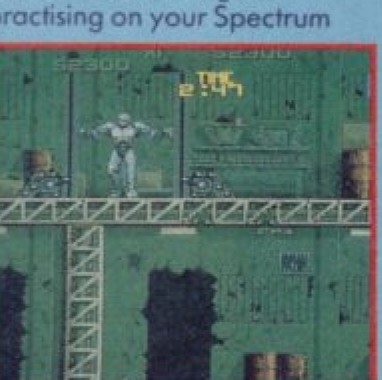
You've seen the advertising, you've read the book, you've used the tea-towel – yes sir, **Robocop** merchandising is big business right now. But you've not seen



the film, of course, have you? I mean – it was Cert 18 – and quite right too I say, squidgy effects with people getting blown away left, right and centre. A bit like your average vid in fact . . . still, as you obviously haven't seen the movie (not even a video), you can be assured that at the very least you can now play the arcade coin-op, brought to you by those cuddly people at Data East.



Correct that man in the corner, Ocean have brought out a game called **Robocop** as well, but the word is that it's not an identical copy of the coin-op, as it was developed independently of the Data East version – so it's no good practising on your Spectrum



before you enter the arcade . . . it's going to cost you money to get good at this one!

Again, as you obviously haven't seen the film – and you probably aren't talking to your parents at the moment – I'll just give you a quick run down of the, for want of a better word, plot. The time – ten to four, the year two thousand and something. The place – Chicago. The problem – you've just been shot to bits by a gang of thugs. Luckily, they can rebuild you – and you, after extensive plastic surgery



and the insertion of a couple of Duracells – are now half man, half robot, all cop. So get out there and clean up the streets, kid.

The Data East designers have, in keeping with the movie you haven't seen, kept subtlety out of the frame, and delivered a clever combination of beat-'em and shoot-'em-up.

Simply, your nicely designed Robocop sprite horizontally scrolls along a cityscape and, at the beginning, **Kung–Fu Master** like, has to take out assorted thugs that rush towards you to attempt a bit of GBH.

You have a typical selection of moves – the best of which is a low crouch and punch. This is frighteningly effective against your flesh and blood components, and crouching low means you don't get it in the neck from those armed with guns. After this bit, you come to a section that, as well as the kamakazie thugs, has snipers firing at you from windows above the street.

This is where the odds start getting a bit even – out comes the gun and you now can blow everyone away, as well as punching the opposition to bits. Power-ups can also be obtained along the way which increase your firepower. And you'll need it, for the end of level nasty is this huge two legged robot that those of us that are over 18 and have seen the film know to be a security robot. This needs hitting many times in order to get past and then on to even greater things – but be prepared to spend quite a bit to learn the knack . . .

Overall then, Robocop is a well implemented variation on a theme – worth a few 10p's of anybody's slush fund.

FAXBOX

Beat-'em-up, shooty hybrid of the film you can't see.

Robocop
Graphics **8**
Sound **7**
Addictiveness **8**
Gameplay **9**

OVERALL RATING
8

WONDER BOY 2

Cutsie games have a habit of catching on. **Bubble Bobble** for instance – where you control little dragons which shoot out streams of bubbles. Cute, huh? And still amazingly successful even 18 months and more after the introduction of the game into the arcade – although the excellent Software Creations/Firebird conversion has probably helped in longevity on the street.

Wonder Boy, the original, was pretty cute too – as you jumpy jumpied through the levels wrapped only in a loin-cloth.

Well, the good news is that you are much better dressed in **Wonder Boy 2.** And what's more, the action is even more cute and the graphics even more cuddly than ever before.

The levels alternate between horizontally scrolling jumpy, jumpy bits, and other sections where you are flying astride a rather odd looking steed.

Either way – the game is great fun to play.

The graphics are astonishingly well designed and very colourful to look at, and really make the game. The action is good too, with a large amount of hugely powerful power-ups that spray multi-coloured bullets, whirlwinds, and unidentified fatal bits that will take the smile off the cute looking enemies which go for you by the dozen.

A highly enjoyable romp – which would make a great 16 bit conversion. Odd that they never make vids about making friends, isn't it?

FAXBOX

The game that your Mum wouldn't mind you playing. Cute, neat, brill.

Wonder Boy 2
Graphics **9**
Sound **8**
Addictiveness **7**
Gameplay **8**

OVERALL RATING
8

OPS

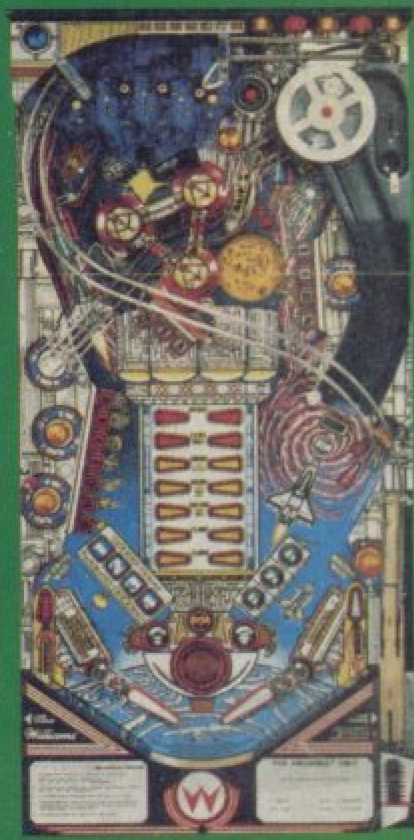


Anyone for tennis? Of the table variety that is. But hold on. There's something a bit odd about the table. I mean. It's at a bit of AN ODD ANGLE ISN'T it? Well, what in fact happens is that you put some of your hard earned dosh into the unit and it levels out so you can play properly — at least until your timer runs out — at which point it's back to the leaning over. But what will they think of next, eh?

This is called **Space Station** and it's another great pintable from Williams.. A bit old fashioned in style, the game plays very well indeed with fairly simple to understand target shots for bonus and multi-ball . . . no puzzling out what to do for a couple or three hours here.

Even better, there's a multi-ball option that comes into play with some well timed shots up the ramp thingy . . . which always adds a bit of excitement to the proceedings.

A few people have been asking us to give a few tips on how to play pinball — so here's the SU advice for Better Pinball Playing for 1989 . . . DON'T PRESS BOTH FLIPPERS AT THE SAME TIME. Got that? . . . then rush down to your local arcade and start practising.







Every year, the Amusement Industry holds a big show in the USA, the AMOA. This year, funnily enough, was no exception — so the place to be in Fall 1989 was Chicago, Illinois. By all accounts, Pinball was very well represented at the show — the most bizarre of which was from Premier, called **Bad Girls. Bad Girls??!!** All the latest vids were there, but with few major surprises, the exception of which was a game from Williams, called **NARC.** This is an anti-drug beat-'em-up — and the graphics were acclaimed by all and sundry . . . screen shots in the next issue.

The best news of the whole year, however, was that Sega has developed a link to go between two **Power Drift** units, so you can play head to head against another player. Yes, mortals, we are talking about two player **Power Drift.** This is really going to be the business.

Power Drift is, of course, **Outrun** on a roller coaster — and at the moment costs, in London, £1 per go. Ouch.

However, our spies have reported much cheaper units in the provinces — in Brighton, for instance, we discovered a unit that gave four goes for £1. That's much more like it. Enjoy.

If **Power Drift** is the big computer game licence of 1989 and one of the key Christmas releases — I'll eat my joystick... Yum. Let's hope it gets better treatment than **Outrun** did. More fab coin-op facts next month.



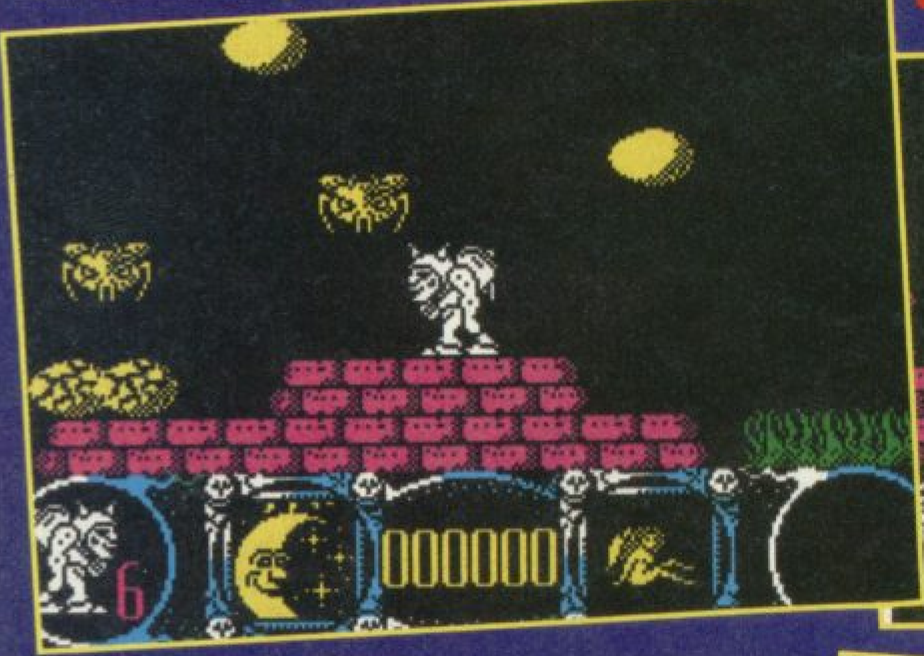
PREV

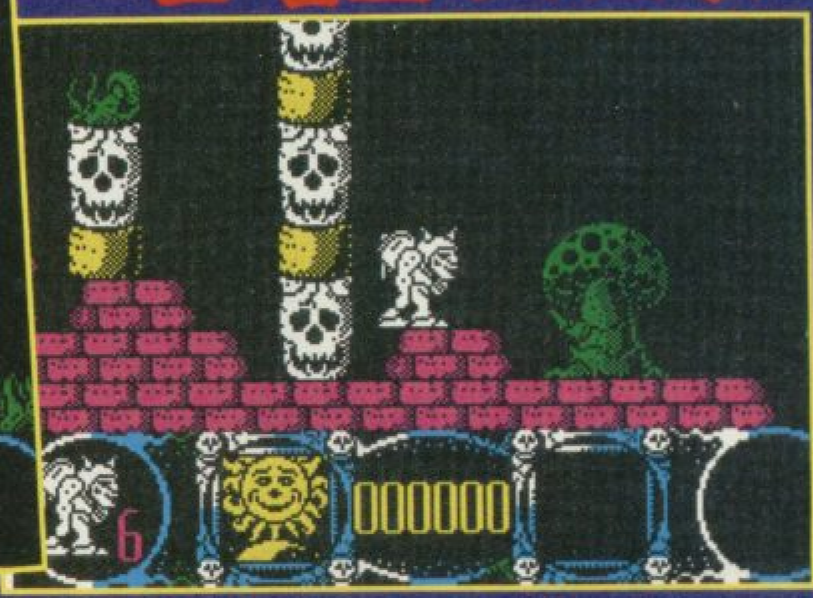
1

To some people he's a genius. To others he had one good idea a while ago and has been rehashing it ever since. His name is Raffael Cecco and this is his latest creation. It's called Stormlord and we've got very little info on it at the moment. So, for the time being just marvel at the pics.

What we do know is that it's similar in style to Exolon, but with a much more fantasy-orientated plot. It's a cause and effect game – you need the shears to chop down the plant to get the key to open the door to get to the next level etc.

Streetdate: February.
Price: £7.95

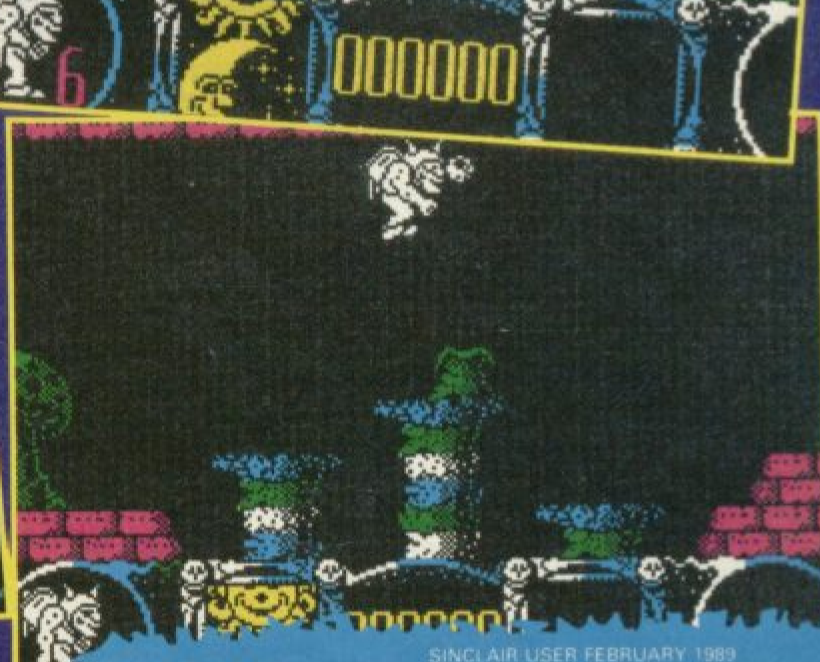












VIEW

2

It's the end of the world – again! Well, nearly. There's a huge alien spaceship and it's headed for Earth. And its intentions are pretty clear. You, as Drak, Last of the Obliterators have been beamed aboard the ship with a view to blowing it to kingdom come.

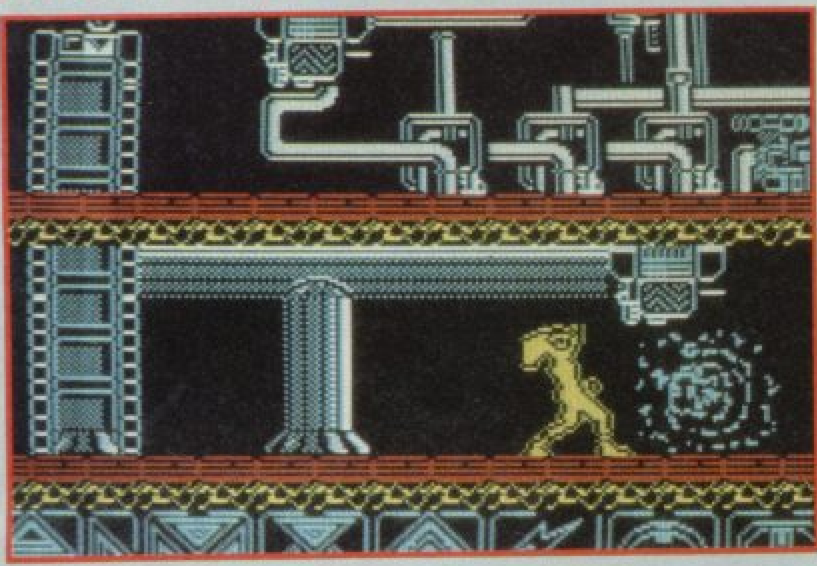
You haven't got long to find your bearings. As soon as you're on the ship, the sophisticated defence mechanisms will begin to rack you and alien drones will be on your tail. By collecting as many pieces of spare equipment and stealing weapons as you go along, not only must you survive the onslaught of the alien guards, but you have to work out a way of destroying the ship before it gets within firing range of the Earth.

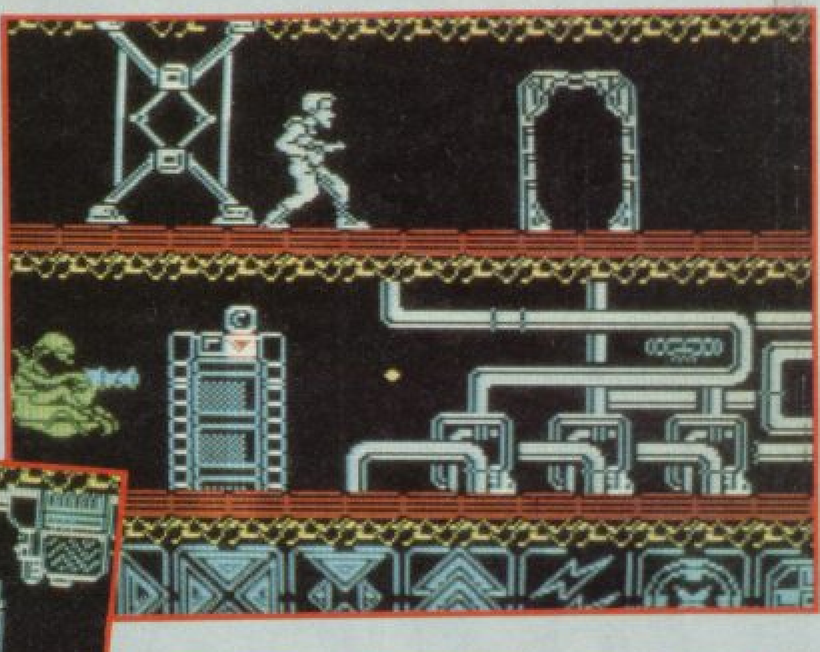
Obliterator is a conversion from an ST game which was respected largely for its graphics, but was thought not to be too hot on gameplay. Well, it remains to be seen whether the Spec version has been improved in the latter respect, but the graphics look dead hot.

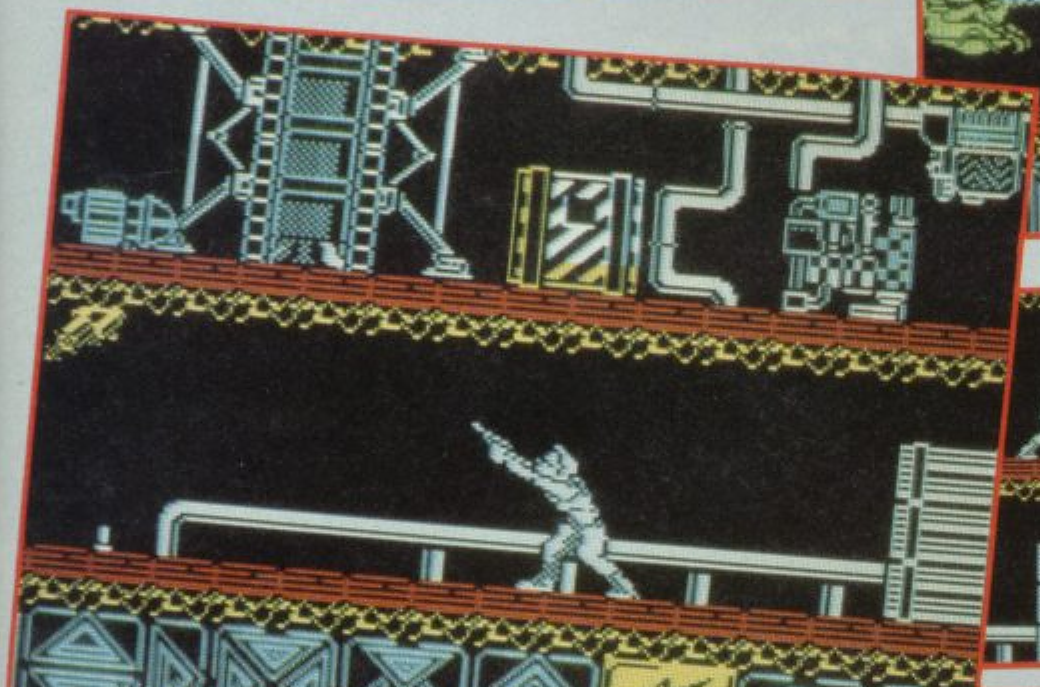
We'll have more information next month.

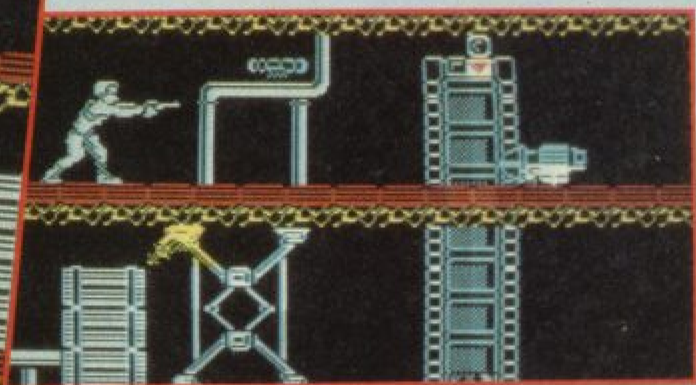
Streetdate: January.

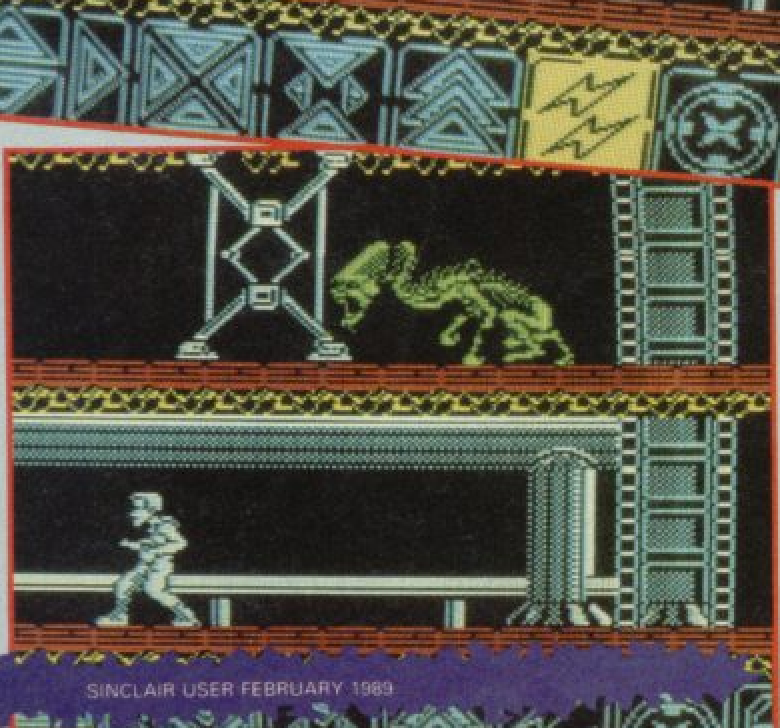
Price: £8.95

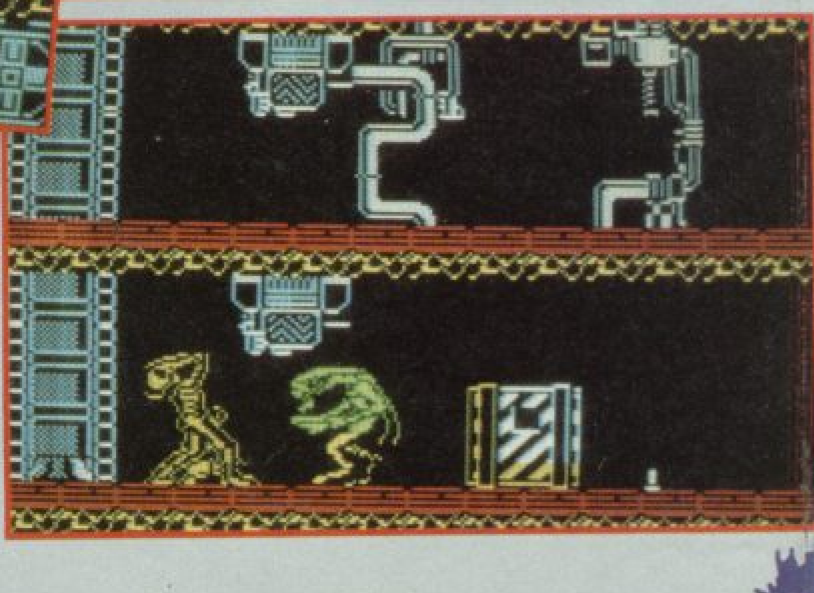












PREV



Ooo. It's been a right old while and no mistake since we've heard from Cascade. And it's nice to see them coming up with such an original idea for a game.

You've been shrunk down in a tiny submarine and injected into the bloodstream of a mad scientist.

Your mission is to fly aournd the body, seeking out a mysterious "second brain" for some reason.

Hands up anyone who has seen Fantastic Voyage or Innerspace.

Anyway, that aside, DNA Warrior (for it is he) is looking like quite a corker of a game. Take a look at the picture here. Looks vaguely R-Typey to us and among the features promised are horizontal bi-directional scrolling (you can go left and right!), a wide variety of attack formations and an improvable weapons system.

Basically the storyline pits you against the body's immune system, fighting off blood cells and plasma and all the other stuff that whooshes around inside the great big organ that is the human body. Eurgh!

Streetdate: February.
Price: £9.95



GamesReview



It's a tough life in 2012; not only is there constant interplanetary war, but those small plastic things you put under plant pots cost £1,000,000,000 each and there are 192 television channels, all showing nothing but **The Price is Right**.

However, it's the interplanetary war which mainly concerns us in **Last Duel**, as you might expect. And what a stonking interplanetary war it is, full of biffs, bangs and explosions which you should thoroughly enjoy contributing to.

Suspend your shock and disbelief when you see the first section, which is utterly, utterly similar to **LED Storm** (also reviewed this issue). What can US Gold be doing, releasing two such similar games? Probably hoping to make twice as much dosh, tee-hee. Anyway, **Last Duel** has a lot more to it than LED Storm, which is largely racing and dodging; **Last Duel** has loads of SHOOTING! Great!

A third of the screen is taken up with the score and energy displays, while the remainder shows the battlefield, which scrolls fairly smoothly (though

VIEW



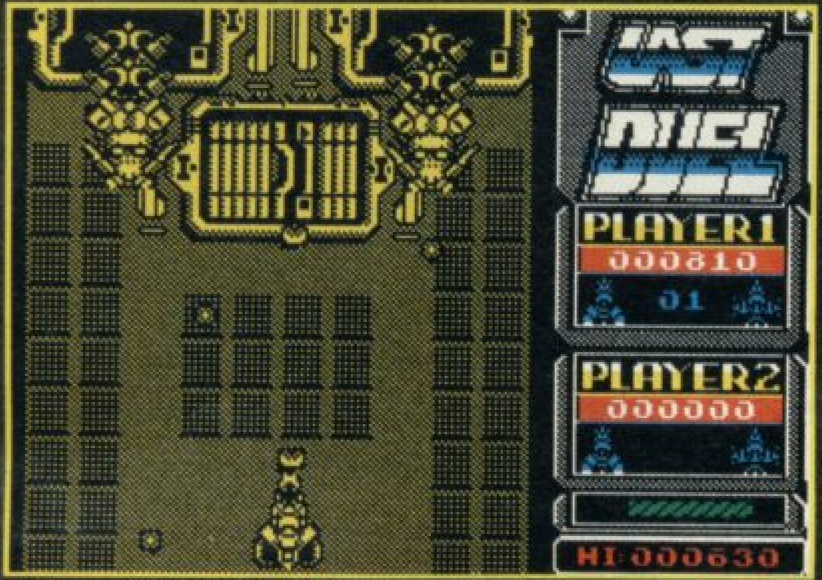
Man, it's a jungle on the streets. Well, that's a stupid thing to say, isn't it? It's a street out on the streets, a road at the worst and there's no denying it (what are you prattling on about? – AS). Streets, however, can get pretty tough and if you don't believe me, take a gander at this pic of Player's forthcoming product Street Gang.

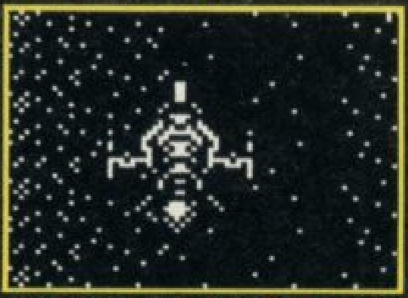
Looks pretty rough to us. The aim of the game is to get from the cissy West side of town to the ultra tough'n'trendy East, in one piece. Along the way you'll have to split more heads than you can imagine, and we're promised a weird and wonderful selection of baddies to ruck.

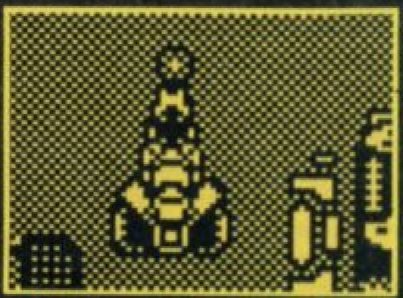
Full review and verdict next issue. Looks like a Joe Blade **in graphics quality stakes.**

Streetdate: February.
Price: £2.99

GamesReview







things get a bit jerky when there are a lot of moving objects on the screen).

The first level is a motorway over which your heavily-armed skimmer, er, skims. Roadside emplacements bombard you, saucers try to shove you off the side, and huge pits threaten to plummet you to your doom. However, a smart zap of the laser trigger, or a death-defying leap into the air, and you can actually complete this phase in about thirty seconds – not counting the time needed to destroy the three wiggling, energy-breathing mechadragons at the end.

Phase two is a bit of a surprise: rather than more of the same, you switch to a spaceship making its way through intergalactic space caverns (huh?). Here, huge shooty-tubes fire bouncing rays of energy at you, while giant flying monsters periodically descend from the skies, and insist on being blasted to pieces before they let you go on.

At the same time, power capsules float down the screen. Pick them up, and you can double or triple your fire-power, restore your energy and add exploding missiles.

So what's the verdict, Eugene? **Last Duel** is smoothly programmed, nicely designed and fast-moving. It hasn't a jot of originality, but it's meat and drink to shoot-'em-up fans. You probably won't want both **LED Storm** and **Last Duel**, though: take my advice and plump for **Last Duel**■

ARCADE REVIEW — FAX BOX

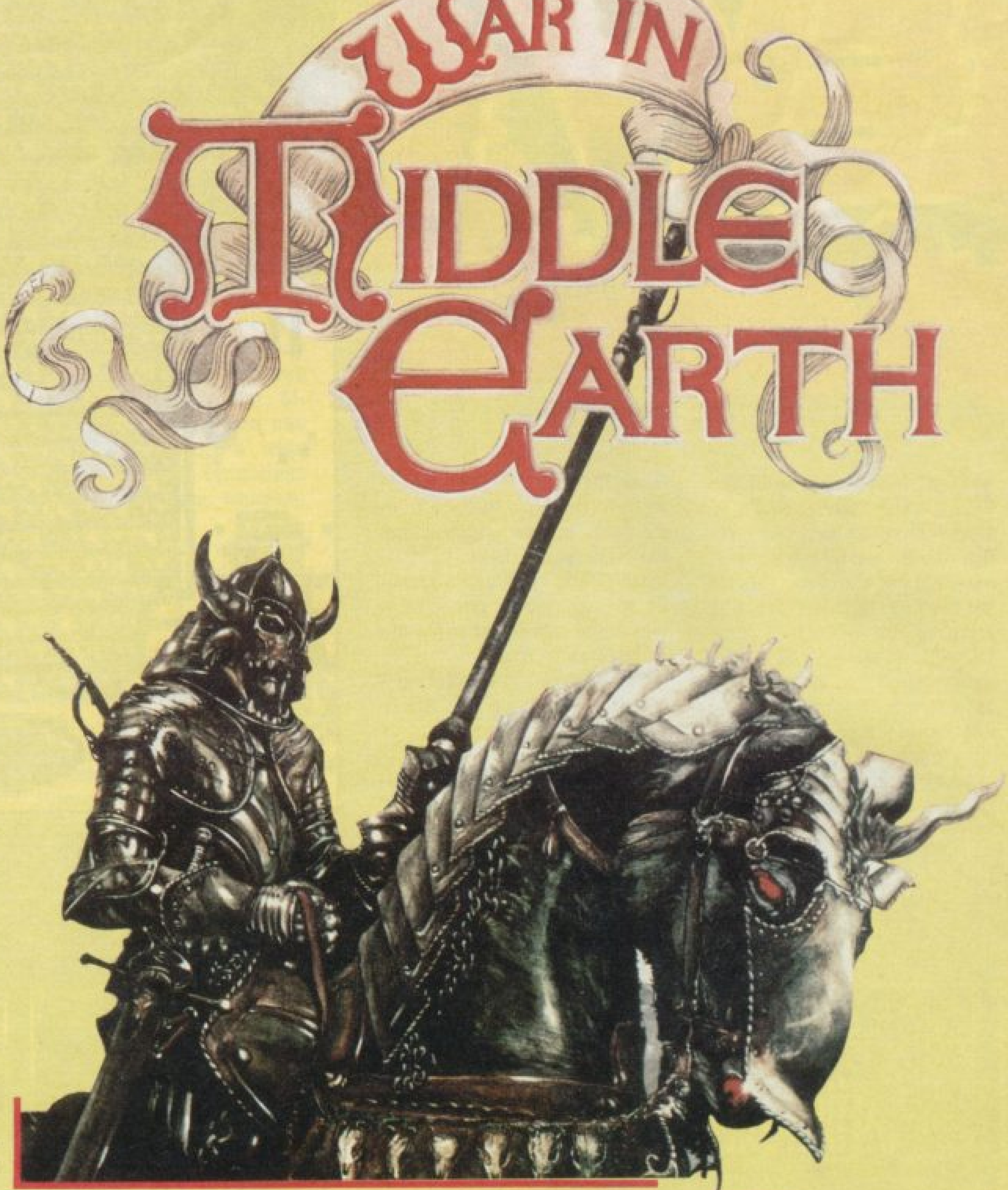
LAST DUEL *Label:* **US GOLD** *Author:* **Tiertex** *Price:* **£8.99** *Memory:* **48K/128K** *Joystick:* **Various**

Capcom coin-op conversion creates crucial critical congratulations.

Reviewer:

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY	OVERALL
82	70	89	78	80

WAR IN MIDDLE EARTH



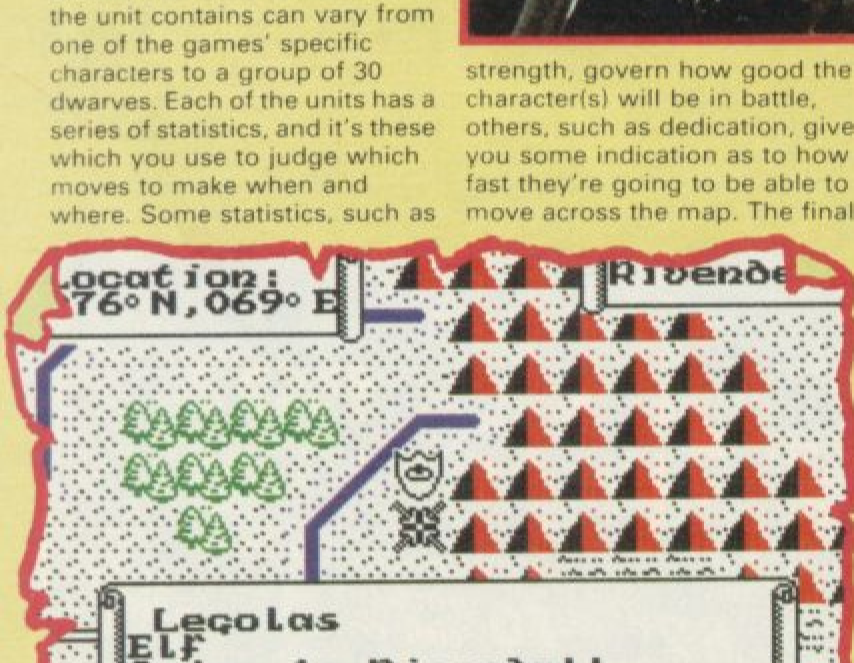
It's not often a wargame gets a large review in SU, which could be regarded as being a little biased, but let's hope that **WIME** puts things to rights. It's not really a true wargame. It's a wargame mixed with an RPG mixed with a bit of adventure and just a smidgen or two or arcade qualities. Four basic elements, all of which have proved themselves in the past in their own respective fields, but when mixed, do they work? Well, funnily enough they do, and reasonably well I might add.

First of all the credits. The main dude responsible for taking three books worth of complicated but very, very enjoyable reading matter and putting it all down as a form of interactive entertainment is none other than Mike Singleton, whose games are all basicaly original and brilliant. **WIME** is no exception.

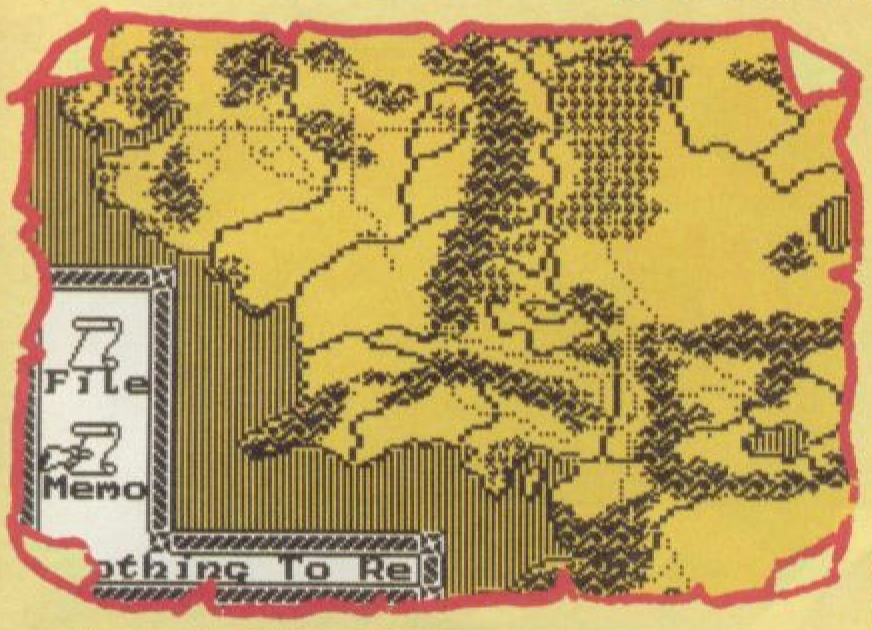
You take control of the forces of good and you have to try to get the infamous magic ring of corruption to Mount Doom and throw it into the fire. Pitted against you are the evil forces of Sauron, consisting mainly of two types of creature, both pretty hideous. The first, and easiest to beat in combat, is the common orc. These foul, pig like creatures travel round in packs of around a dozen, and basically wander everywhere. The second type of nasty, and these are pretty darn hard to beat even at the easiest of times, are the Nazgul. Black, deathlike riders, these home in on the evil ring and are generally near invincible in combat.

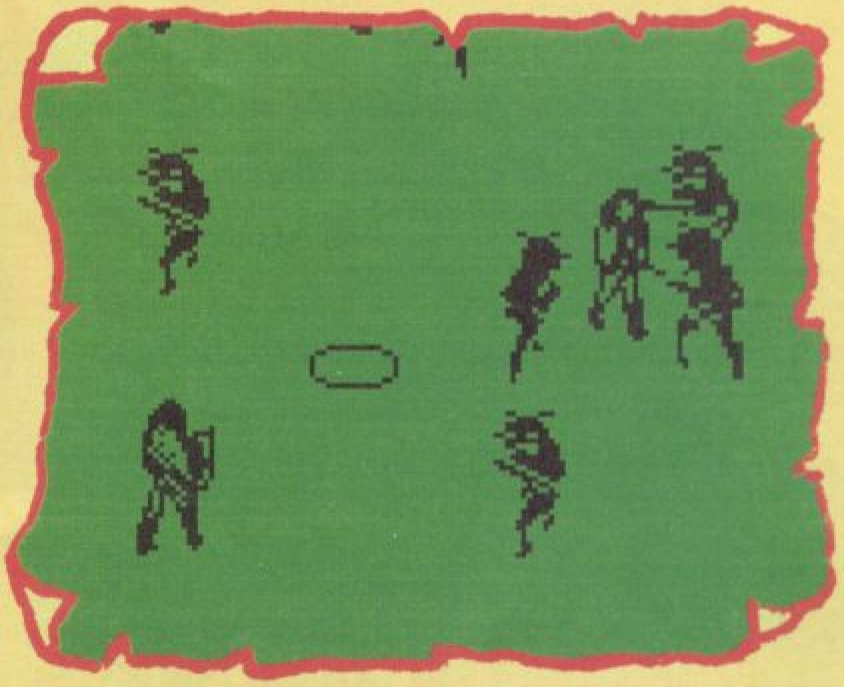
You begin in command of around 100 'units'. What exactly the unit contains can vary from one of the games' specific characters to a group of 30 dwarves. Each of the units has a series of statistics, and it's these which you use to judge which moves to make when and where. Some statistics, such as strength, govern how good the character(s) will be in battle, others, such as dedication, give you some indication as to how fast they're going to be able to move across the map. The final statistic, their virtuosity, is the key factor in getting the ring across the map.

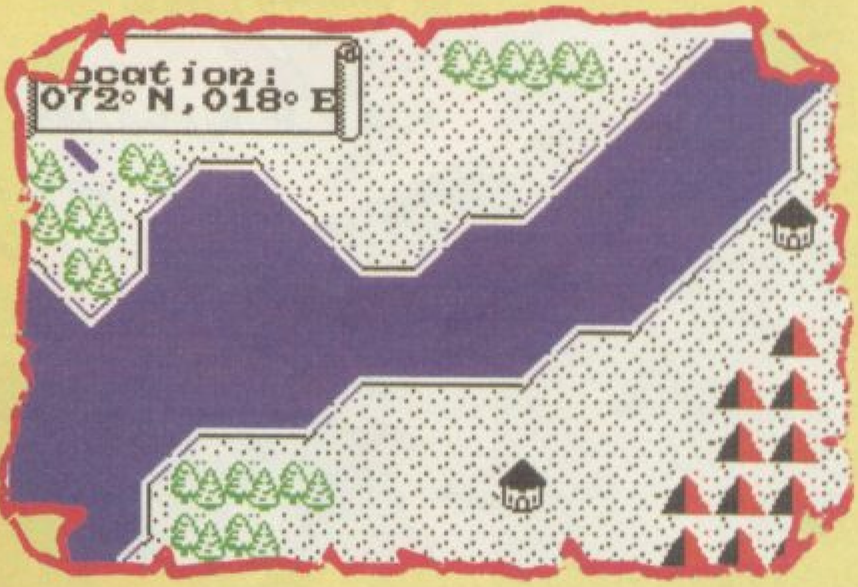
The longer you have the ring, the more corrupt you become. What you have to do is get the ring all the way across the map at a steady rate, swapping between different characters to use as ring bearers.





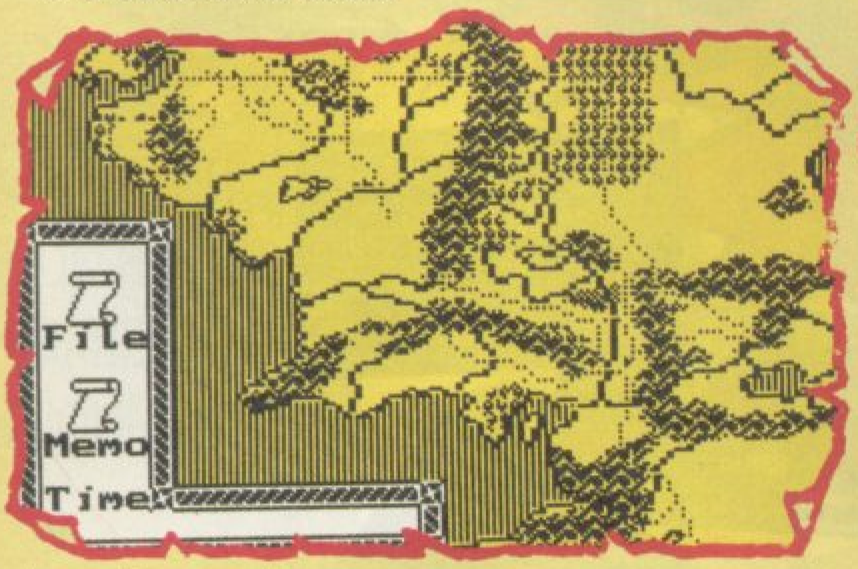






There are three different playing modes. In the main overview map, you deal with all the loading and saving bits, along with the time advancement icon. The map shows the entire playing area, and the positions of all your units. It does not show the position of the enemy, so there's no room for cheating.

In the main command mode, you get an expanded area of the map, with all the different terrains and features labelled.



by scrolling around, the names of all the towns, along with all your units are displayed. Move the pointer over the icon that represents one of your units (a shield) and click once. Now, if you move up or down on the joystick, you can view all the characters in that group. Double click and you go into command issue mode. There are three things you can tell a group to do. You can tell them to go to a specific place; you can tell them to join up with another group; or you can get them to follow another group. This is all done by selecting which you want to do on a menu bar, and then clicking the cursor over the appropriate target.

When you've issued all the commands you can possibly want to issue, go to the overview map, and click on the time advancement icon. This is the cue for action to begin. All the orders you've given out will begin to be executed. Of course, when you're moving 100 units around on a map, you are bound to get into a ruck sooner or later, and this is where the game gets really good. You are given a list of all the adversaries battling it out, yours and Sauron's. Press fire, and you go into the game's arcade sequence.

All the men are shown in a semi-3D representation of the battlefield, and it's a race against time to get as many men involved as possible. You are given a small circular pointer. Click in one of your men, and then on one of the enemy, and that man will run off to do battle. The game is designed so that each enemy soldier can only attack one target per round, so what you've got to try to do is to get as many men onto one target as possible. This bit is great. It's fast, it's frantic and it's fun.

Graphics aren't too bad; there's some nice detail on the main map, and the icons are both clear and recognisable. The battle sequences are very nice. Each of the enemy types looks different, as do the friendly armies, which more than compensates for the bland green background in this section.

It's very easy to do. It's also very hard to do. In fact it's up to you how hard to make it (choose out of 15 skill levels), 0 making the Nazgul amazingly easy to kill, 14 making everybody except you practically invincible.

I really like it. It may not appeal to all (arcade freaks stay away). But if you're a fan of th books, then you won't be disappointed. The attention to detail is amazing and the feel of the book has been captured perfectly. Strategy buffs, or even people who want to spend a more productive Sunday afternoon rather than defeating the semi-quaser Thraglets from Venus again, why not give it a whirl? Mike does it again■

ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

WAR IN MIDDLE EARTH *Label:* ***Melbourne House*** *Author:* ***Mike Singleton*** *Price:* ***£9.99*** *Memory:* ***48K/128K*** *Joystick:* ***Various***

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY
74	61	78	86

Interesting blend of almost every genre of game. Works well, too.

Reviewer: Tony Dillon

OVERALL **79**

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

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WAR IN MIDDLE EARTH, DREAM ZONE AND VICTORY RD.
MEGA R-TYPE MAP, NEW NINTENDO REVEALED

GREMLIN'S PREDICTIONS FOR 1989

THIS IS GREMLIN →

Sorry about the headline – we were in a bit of a rush and Wayne Smedley happened to be in the office and he 'Swore he could draw ...'

JANUARY

Post-Christmas nausea. Evangelists Jim and Tammy Bakker go on TV and blame the Devil for their recent cash scandal. The Devil sues for libel.

FEBRUARY

Satellite TV starts. The first program is a re-run of *The Brady Bunch.* Rupert Murdoch promises to make improvements to the quality of programming, and announces that he has bought the rights to *The Partridge Family* for "a two-figure sum".

MARCH

Amstrad announces an "exciting new development which will give the Spectrum a whole new lease of life." It turns out to be a price cut of three pounds, two Codemasters games and a free "Snapeezee" blank cassette.

APRIL

Russia invades China. Questioned in the United Nations, Premier Gorbachev explains "Keep your flares on daddy-o, haven't you heard of April Foolski jokes?"

MAY

The latest Summer craze is hang-skateboarding. However, since it's invariably fatal it quickly loses its appeal despite the appearance of a hastily-produced magazine called *YO! HANG TEN CRAZY SKATEBOARD NINJA WARRIOR* Monthly.

JUNE

A long hot summer of software tedium sets in.

JULY

Monsoon season begins as summer holidays start. Thousands stranded at airports. Papers full of bikinied beauties with umbrellas. Back to the computers.

AUGUST

Jimmy and Tammy Bakker caught up in new scandal. They blame the Devil again. He loses his temper and the world is completely destroyed by the four horsemen of the Apocalypse.

SEPTEMBER

Cancelled.

Gremlin's "Look at me!" Corner

This month's Noel Edmonds award for Outrageous Self Promotion goes to the software industry's answer to Bros – the Darlings. Beaming from their photo in the inlay of the new Dizzy game, the Darlings tell us how they rose to become bestselling software giants from lowly teenagers through good old Dickensian hard work; slaving for hours over duplicating machines and suffering the living hell of selling software mail order.

Nice to see that, as the inlay claims, the best programmers deserve the best rewards. And who wrote the game? The Oliver Twins. Marvellous.

Gremlin has decided to organise a nationwide award scheme for computer repair services. There are no winners, but losers will be awarded a special certificate on reaching 100 points. Ten points are awarded every time a shop uses any of these excuses:

- ★ We can fix any Spectrum so long as it isn't black. Or grey.
- ★ You just can't get the parts, see, they make 'em in Greenland.
- ★ No, we don't do TV leads, there's no demand for them.
- ★ No mate, it costs more to fix one key than it does to buy a new Spectrum.
- ★ Sorry it's taking so long, it's the postal strike. In Greenland.
- ★ It's yer CPU MS/DOS interface extender RAM widget, an' they don't make them any more. We can sell you an Amstrad PC though.
- ★ You've had this plugged into the mains, haven't you?
- ★ You've invalidated the guarantee by taking it out of the box.
- ★ We can't fix it without a chit signed by Clive Sinclair.
- ★ Sorry, this is a butcher's.



LAST MONTH'S COMPETITION

All things considered the quality of the entries to last month's offering were fair to good, "things" being Christmas, New Year and the lack of Postal Services. Ideas for the picture were diverse to say the least. Almost nobody agreed on joke topic; this was good. Instead we had ideas from the vulgar to the incomprehensible. Among the former was "Get your hand out of my trousers" among the latter was "His nails are very curly." Weird.

Joining the Sinclair User **obscure references bandwagon was Neil Cross from Tyne and Wear with "Eat your heart out Wayne Smedley of Southend coz you ain't getting one, right?" Obscure but not quite funny enough. The winner was this from Nicholas Pettigrew from Gwynedd, North Wales: "250,000 units sold but these are the only two that will load!" Quite funny and quite in keeping with the picture. SPECIAL NOTICE. LIBEL LAWYERS PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS A JOKE. IT IS NOT REALLY TRUE, OK?**

Anyway Nicholas will get £20 by cheque in the nearish future.





GREMLIN CAPTION COMPETITION No 26

Just look at this! Jim Douglas and Alison Skeat just before entering the Sinclair User offices after the new year. Or something else? We want to know, actually we don't want to know that much but we really want to fill up this space. So, take a look at this picture, look at these people and consider what these two people might be thinking or saying . . . Gremlin reckons it ought to be easy this one . . .

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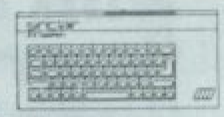
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